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Author(s): John D. Turner

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THE GNOSTIC SETHIANS AND MIDDLE PLATONISM: INTERPRETATIONS OF THE *TIMAEUS* AND *PARMENIDES*[1]

BY

JOHN D. TURNER

ABSTRACT: One may construe the Sethian Gnostic picture of the world and its origins as an interpretation of the biblical protology of the book of Genesis in the light of the Platonic distinction between an ideal, exemplary realm of eternal stable being and its more or less deficient earthly and changeable copy, in which the principal Platonic dialogues of reference are the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides*. Various Sethian treatises offer us accounts of the origin and generation of both these realms; while their portrayal of the origin and deployment of the earthly realm is unmistakably influenced by their readings of Plato's *Timaeus*, their account of the origin and deployment of the ideal realm is noticeably influenced by readings of Plato's *Parmenides*. This article attempts to show that the shift from the *Timaeus* as the primary Platonic dialogue of reference for the Middle Platonic thought of the first two centuries to the *Parmenides* as the primary dialogue of reference for the emerging Neoplatonism of the third century is also visible in the Sethian treatises. In mid- to later second-century Sethian treatises, the cosmology of the *Timaeus* serves as an exegetical template to interpret the Genesis protology, but with the turn to the third century, the Sethian trestises that circulated in Plotinus' circle have abandoned all interest in the Genesis protology in favor of a theology of transcendental ascent.

No less than eleven of the fifty-three treatises comprising the Nag Hammadi Library fit the designation "Sethian Gnostic."[2] They reveal the existence and nature of a hitherto unrecognized religious competitor of

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[1] The present article stems from an oral presentation on the same topic delivered at the Villejuif Centre d'études des religions du Livre Conférence of June 10, 2004 organized by Jean-Daniel Dubois and Philippe Hoffmann, while portions of the section on the *Parmenides* stem from an oral presentation at the Collège de France on "The Sethian Platonizing Apocalypses and Neoplatonic Origins" on June 24, 2004 organized by Michel Tardieu; to these three colleagues I owe my lasting gratitude.

[2] See my *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, section « Études » 6; Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval; Louvain-Paris: Éditions Peeters, 2001), 57-92.

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early Christianity. Sethian Gnosticism is presently the earliest form of Gnosticism for which we possess a great deal of textual evidence. It appears to antedate and form a partial source for another equally well-documented form of Gnosticism, the Christian school of Valentinus (120-160 CE) and his followers. It had its roots in a form of heterodox Jewish speculation on the biblical figure of Sophia, the wisdom by which God created, nourished, and enlightened the world. The Sethian Gnostics distributed these biblical functions of Sophia among a hierarchy of feminine principles. The two most important were 1) a transcendent divine Mother called Barbelo, the First Thought of their supreme deity, the Invisible Spirit; and 2) a lower Sophia ultimately responsible for both the creation of the physical world and the incarnation of portions of the supreme Mother's divine essence into human bodies, often by the instrumentality of her offspring, the world-creator Yaldabaoth-Saklas. Salvation was achieved by the supreme Mother's reintegration of her own dissipated essence into its original unity. These figures and events were linked together in a mythical narrative inspired by the two great protological texts of the period, the biblical book of Genesis and Plato's dialogue the *Timaeus*. In fact one might say that the Sethian picture of the world and its origins resulted from the interpretation of the biblical protology of the book of Genesis in the light of the Platonic distinction between an ideal, exemplary realm of eternal stable being and its more or less deficient earthly and changeable copy. The Sethian treatises offer us accounts of the origin and generation of both these realms; while their portrayal of the origin and deployment of the earthly realm is unmistakably influenced by their readings of Plato's *Timaeus*, their account of the origin and deployment of the ideal realm is noticeably influenced by readings of Plato's *Parmenides*. In what follows, I would like to explore these influences, first those of the *Timaeus*, and second, those of the *Parmenides*.

I. *Gnostic Readings of the* Timaeus

It is well-known that the cosmogony and anthropogony of many gnostic texts is based on a creative reading of the text of Genesis in the light of the Platonic doctrine of models and copies, as a means of explaining how the deficiency of this world could have been derived from the perfection of the divine world. In the gnostic view, as in that of a Hellenistic Jew like Philo of Alexandria, the protology of Genesis occurs on two planes, the heavenly (the creation according to Gen 1:1-2:3) and earthly (the cre-

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ation according to Gen 2:4 ff.). The first creation story tells of the creation of an intelligible world whose contents form the prototypes for the creation of its perceptible counterpart in the second account.

For the Gnostics, there are two creative figures, the supreme deity who spontaneously gives rise to the divine heavenly world, and his lowly counterpart, the creator Archon who aggressively fabricates a lower psychic and material world as a dim and defective copy of the heavenly one. Likewise, gnostic sources often distinguish two maternal figures, the Mother on high, the providential instrument of the supreme deity, and a lower and somewhat errant mother—usually called Sophia—who mistakenly gives birth to this creator Archon, but later becomes active in the lower world to assist in restoring the deficiency she had thereby produced.[3]

In his *Tree of Gnosis*, Ioan Culianu[4] concluded that "Gnostic exegesis of Genesis admits a definition strikingly similar to Philonic exegesis: It is an interpretation of a Jewish text according to a set of rules derived from Platonism." Thus in Middle Platonic fashion, Philo of Alexandria identified the Biblical creator God with a supreme Monad who generates and presides *over* the Logos—the paradigmatic model of the *Timaeus* conceived as an intelligible world of ideas identified as God's thoughts—whose powers create and govern the sensible world. But the Gnostic reading of scripture revised this ranking by identifying the supreme God of Genesis with Plato's Demiurge, whose supremacy—on a *literal reading* of the *Timaeus*—appeared to be compromised by having to consult a divine paradigm *above* him as the model for his creation. This suggests that there must be a God presiding

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[3] In the Sethian interpretation of Gen 2:4 ff., one can postulate two son figures, the heavenly Adam of Genesis 1 (called Adamas or Pigeradamas or Autogenes) and his earthly copy, the Adam of Genesis 2, shaped by the Archon in the garden. One can further discern two more mother figures, a heavenly Eve, called Zoë or the Epinoia of light, and the earthly Eve produced from Adam's side by the Archon, as well as two more sons, a heavenly Seth ("the great Seth"), whose earthly image was born as the son of the earthly Adam and Eve once they had been enlightened by the Mother on high. In fact, Gen 1:26 ("let us create Adam in our image, according to our likeness") could be construed to mean that: 1) on the transcendent plane, the high deity must be the absolute Human ("Man"); his offspring, the heavenly Adamas, would be the Son of Man, and Adamas' son Seth would be "the son of the Son of Man" (as in *Eugnostos the Blessed* V 13,12-13) or the like; and 2) on the earthly plane the plural "we" refers to the archontic fashioners of Adam's body.

[4] Ioan P. Culianu, *Les gnoses dualistes d'Occident : histoire et mythes* (Paris: Plon, 1990), Engl. trans. by H. S. Weiser, *The Tree of Gnosis: Gnostic Mythology from Early Christianity to Modern Nihilism*, (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 123-5.

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over the ideal realm who is superior to the God of Genesis. In addition, the biblical stress on the sole godhead of a creator who jealously asserts his sole supremacy, would cause Platonist exegetes to raise serious questions about a god who boasts in his supremacy ("I am God and there is none other beside me"), but who is now recognized *not* to be supreme. The implication is that this creator god must be a faulty being, vainly boastful and ignorant of the God beyond him.[5]

As the link between the supreme God and the lower creator, the Gnostics followed Middle Platonic precedent by positing an intermediate divine figure as the realm of the divine thoughts or Ideas, who may be conceived either as the supreme deity's masculine Child or Intellect or as his feminine consort or First Thought. The multiplicity of God's thoughts is expressed as a Pleroma of male and female ideal aeonic entities, the last of which, usually named Sophia, becomes the mother of the actual creator of the perceptible universe.

Although culpability for the deficiencies of the earthly realm must be assigned to the world creator, he must also maintain an essential relation to the divine intelligence of which he is indeed a distant product. This dilemma was resolved by construing the world creator as an *unintended* product of an element of the divine intelligible realm that has sufficiently distanced itself from its source as to become unaware of its proper subordination

[5] For M. Waldstein ("The Primal Triad in the *Apocryphon of John*," in *The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* [ed. J. D. Turner and A. McGuire; Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 44; Leiden, New York, & Köln: E. J. Brill, 1997], 154, the *Apocryphon of John* splits the Jewish creator god into an upper God of pure goodness, who is personally identified as the transcendent God of Middle-Platonic theology who retained some central features of the God of Israel, and an evil lower God, Yaldabaoth, who was personally identified as the God of Israel, but is portrayed as a parody of the Demiurge in Plato's *Timaeus*. Yaldabaoth, mistakenly begotten by his mother Sophia by means of her own productive power and wisdom and without either the consent of the supreme deity or the cooperation of her appointed male consort, is clearly identified with the creator God of Genesis. He turns out to be even more self-willed than his mother, whose spiritual power he literally steals in order to begin creating a world of his own that he can control however he pleases. Aware only of his mother Sophia who bore him, but completely unaware of the divine realm above her, his mother's stolen power moves him to unwittingly create a counterfeit world as a poor imitation of the higher divine realm which he can at best only imagine. Thereupon he immediately brings into being a gang of angelic subordinates as fellow archons (rulers) to help him control the realm of darkness below the luminescent divine world. And he does this thinking that *he*, Yaldabaoth, is *the* only god.

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to the supreme God. In turn, this element—usually named Sophia—becomes an ambiguous figure: it not only gives unwitting rise to the creator of a world that was not intended to be as it is, but also serves as the channel for a portion of the divine intelligence that—either unintentionally or by actual theft—comes to reside in the created order, specifically in the protoplastic human.[6] In turn, the supreme paradigm of the *Timaeus* becomes the ideal aeonic world generated by a deity superior both to it and to the demiurge, whose original role is further subdivided between two distinct figures, both defective and ignorant: the demiurgical desire to further express the fullness of the ideal world is reassigned to a new parental figure such as Sophia or the Logos, while the actual creative implementation is assigned to an even lower offspring and his divine assistants. In these ways, it appears that the *Timaeus*—with certain readjustments[7]—offered a basic template for gnostic solutions to the exegetical enigmas of the Genesis creation account.

II. *Sethian Interpretations of the* Timaeus

With the exception of the reversed episodes of the fall of the angels and the flood, it is the narrative sequence of Genesis 1-9 that governs the episodic sequence of the anthropogonical and soteriological drama of the second part of the *Apocryphon of John* (II 13,14-30,11), while the hierarchical interrelationship between its main actors and their respective roles seems to be governed by the reinterpretation of the *Timaeus*' cosmogony that I have described. On the other hand, the influence of Genesis is far less

[6] The Sethian Gnostics in fact postulated a double Sophia. On a higher level and under a different name, she functions as a creator and savior figure, the divine Thought and Providence, the very self-reflection of the high deity, the Mother Barbelo who both originally projects and finally saves the image of true humanity for the benefit of earthly human beings. But she also functions on a lower level in the form of her lower double Sophia, the mother of the ignorant creator. Thus the ambiguity: Wisdom can be understood as both good and bad; she brings enlightenment, but she is also responsible for the creation of the material world whose luxury and delights are obstacles to enlightenment. If one conceives the world as an evil and seductive trap, then the wisdom that informs it is bad; but as the revealer of a higher existence, wisdom is good. Therefore it is logical to suppose two kinds of wisdom, a higher enlightening manifestation of wisdom such as is represented in the figure of Barbelo and who is in some sense the Mother of the Living, and a lower, fallen form of wisdom.

[7] Mainly the interposition of a misguided Sophia-Logos figure between the creator and rest of the aeonic paradigms.

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apparent in the theogony and cosmogony of its first part (II 2,26-13,14), limited perhaps to the origin of light, darkness, and the primeval chaos narrated in its first eight verses. These are articulated along typically Middle Platonic lines: the nature of the first principles, the divine intelligence and its contents, and the question of what originates and governs the cosmos. And it is mainly the *Timaeus*—sometimes fancifully interpreted—that guided their articulation.

1. *The Supreme Principles and the Pleroma*

The most prominent of the Sethian texts, the *Apocryphon of John*, features a supreme divine triad called Father, Mother and Child. In earlier work I have suggested that the nomenclature and metaphysics of this Father-Mother-Child triad was likely derived from an interpretation of the second main section of Plato's *Timaeus* (48e-52d),[8] where Plato enumerates a triad of principles (the forms, the receptacle or nurse of becoming, and the images of the forms constituting the phenomenal world, but leaving aside the Demiurge, who would be a fourth):

> We must conceive of three kinds, that which comes to be, that *in* which it comes to be, and that *from* whose imitation what comes to be is born. We may fittingly compare the receptacle (τὸ δεχόμενον) to a mother, the

[8] See my *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, section « Études » 6. Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval; Louvain-Paris: Éditions Peeters, 2001), 532; I have discussed this supreme triad elsewhere in "The Gnostic Threefold Path to Enlightenment: The Ascent of Mind and the Descent of Wisdom," *Novum Testamentum* 22 (1980), 324-351; "Sethian Gnosticism: A Literary History," in *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism and Early Christianity*, ed. C. W. Hedrick and R. Hodgson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986), 55-86; "Gnosticism and Platonism: The Platonizing Sethian Texts from Nag Hammadi in their Relation to Later Platonic Literature," in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, ed. R. T. Wallis and J. Bregman (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 424-59; "Text, Translation and Notes" to *Allogenes* in *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII and XIII*, ed. C. W. Hedrick (Nag Hammadi Studies 28; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990); "Introduction" and "Commentaire," in C. Barry, W.-P. Funk, P.-H. Poirier, J. D. Turner, *Zostrien (NH VIII, 1)* (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, section « Textes » 24; Québec and Leuven-Paris: Presses de l'Université Laval and Éditions Peeters, 2000), 32-225; 483-662, "Introduction," in W.-P. Funk, P.-H. Poirier, J. D. Turner, *Marsanès (NH X,1)*. (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, section « Textes » 27. Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval; Louvain-Paris: Éditions Peeters, 2000), 1-248, and "Introduction," in W.-P. Funk, M. Scopello, P.-H. Poirier, and J. D. Turner, *L'Allogène (XI,3)* (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, section "Textes" 30; Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval; Louvain-Paris: Éditions Peeters, 2003), 14-210.

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> source to a father, and the nature (φύσις) between them to a child (*Timaeus* 50cd).

The Father-Mother-Child triad of the *Apocryphon of John* exhibits some attributes similar to those that Plato applied to this triad of principles in the *Timaeus*: just as Plato conceived the Forms deriving from their paternal source, the radiant light that emanates from the supreme Invisible Spirit enters into his First Thought Barbelo, "the Womb of the All" or maternal receptacle in which the Self-generated Child (the Autogenes Christ) is generated as a luminous spark.[9]

Again, while the four Platonizing Sethian treatises—*Zostrianos, Allogenes*, the *Three Steles of Seth*, and *Marsanes*—basically portray Barbelo as a masculine divine intellect within which intelligible entities are generated, they also assign Barbelo characteristics echoing those of the maternal receptacle of Plato's *Timaeus*. According to *Zostrianos*, Barbelo serves as an "eternal receptacle" or "space" (χώρημα, VIII 82,8) in order that the intelligible entities that indwell her might have a stable and limited place, and that those who come forth from her might become purely simple individuals (VIII 88,16-22; 127,7-15).

Unlike the maternal receptacle of the *Timaeus*, however, Barbelo is not an ultimate principle independent from and coeval with the Invisible Spirit. Nevertheless, as the actualization of his thought, she is his direct image and the hypostatic manifestation of the pre-existent light which *is* coeval with the Father.

Another difference from the *Timaeus* is that Barbelo is never associated with the attribute of Necessity or the "wandering" cause, nor with the uneven swaying that Plato attributes to the Receptacle when it is filled with the disordered traces of precosmic potencies.[10] Instead, the *Apocryphon of John* assigns these characteristics to a lower mother figure, Sophia, who does indeed manifest characteristics of irrationality, intractability, instability and wandering. Together with the Four Luminaries in whom she originally resided, Sophia seems to occupy a level in Sethian cosmology roughly

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[9] The shorter version of the *Apocryphon of John* portrays this event in a manner more typical of Neoplatonic metaphysics by having Barbelo conceive the Son as a self-begotten spark in her act of turning toward the Invisible Spirit and contemplating him, while the longer version portrays a more procreative process in which the Invisible Spirit looks at Barbelo and begets in her a spark of light.

[10] Although *Zostrianos* 80,8-10 says that "[she began to] strive, since it was [im]possible to unite with his [image]."

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equivalent to that of the cosmic soul in the *Timaeus*, with its circles of the Same and the Different.[11] As entities that contain the divine souls of the archetypal Adam, Seth, and his future offspring, the Luminaries are set in a rational and harmonious order by Barbelo's Child, the Autogenes-Christ, who thereby plays a positive role quite similar to that of the Demiurge in the *Timaeus*. But while the Luminaries are characterized by stability and sameness, Sophia is the author of unstable movement, wandering astray from her place in the fourth Luminary into the sphere of irrationality, difference, and otherness. Unlike Plato's world soul that eternally leads an intelligent life (*Timaeus* 36e), in the *Apocryphon of John*, Sophia—although she occupies an ontological level roughly equal to that of the *Timaeus*' world soul—resembles more the immortal part of individual souls buffeted about upon its initial incarnation in a physical body (*Timaeus* 43a).

As the source of such disorder and evil, Sophia is also conceived as the lower feminine principle unmastered by the masculine principle of order, in effect also playing the role of Necessity in the *Timaeus*. She takes on a notable characteristic of Plato's Receptacle when it is said that she became "agitated" when Yaldabaoth extracted some of her power from her, moving to and fro in the darkness of ignorance (BG 45,6-19; II 13,13-26). While Sethian sources never explicitly identify Sophia as an irrational soul, her fall into agitation and separation from the eternal stability of the divine Luminaries is essentially the act of an irrational soul.

2. *The Gnostic World Creator and Plato's Demiurge*

According to the *Timaeus*, the universe "has come about through divine providence" (30b8-9). Generously modeled by a good and intelligent

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[11] For Plato, the cosmic soul is certainly a rational entity; even the Circle of the Other "partakes of reason and harmony" (36E), contemplating every aspect of reality along with the Circle of the Same. On the other hand, the Soul's rationality is a derivative one, having been bestowed upon it by its maker, the Demiurge. In the *Statesman* 269c7 the Stranger describes the universe (τὸ πᾶν) as "a living thing which has been allotted reason by its framer" (ζῷον ὂν καὶ φρόνησιν εἰληχὸς ἐκ τοῦ συναρμόσαντος); although Plato does not use the word "soul," he surely implies its presence as something granted rationality by a principle external to it, as in the *Timaeus*, although its innate motion is due to Necessity (ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἔμφυτον, 269d2), which suggests its essential irrationality. In addition, there is also the well-known passage concerning the existence of both a good and an evil cosmic soul in the *Laws* X 896DE, where the Athenian Stranger concludes: "let us assume not less than two—the beneficent soul and that which is capable of effecting results of the opposite kind."

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Demiurge, the universe is exempt from destruction by the everlasting bond of his providence.

By contrast, the gnostic world creator is a jealous conniver who makes a counterfeit universe according to an archetype he cannot directly see. According to the *Apocryphon of John*:[12]

> **II 12** [33] Now he put [34] everything in order, in the likeness of the first [35] aeons that had come into being, so as to **13** [1] create them in an incorruptible pattern—not that [2] he himself had actually seen the incorruptible things—rather, it was the power [3] within him that he had received from [4] his Mother, since she had begotten within him the likeness of [5] the cosmos.

Thus the Sethian world creator Yaldabaoth—though never explicitly called 'demiurge'—is clearly a negative parody of Plato's Demiurge. In the *Apocryphon of John*, the two acts of Plato's demiurge—separating the elements and then shaping them into the world body—are divided between Sophia and Yaldabaoth.[13] Yaldabaoth—who is *himself* amorphous and chaotic—is no true demiurge. Even though he thinks he is copying an *image* of the eternal aeonic paradigm, he cannot directly see it and thus produces a chaotic copy with more similarity to his own being than to the image he copies. And his ability to copy what he does is due—not to his ungrudging intelligence or to his vision of the supreme realities—but to the power he stole from his mother Sophia, by which an unintended element of perfection has nevertheless come to dwell in his creation.

A slightly different and fuller version of the world creator's demiurgical activity is offered by the Sethian treatise *Zostrianos*:

> **VIII 9** [27] [He sows] [28] [from his] reason, since it [is im]possible [29] [for the archon] of [creation] to [30] see any of the eternal entities. **10** [1] He saw a reflection, and with reference to [2] the reflection that he [saw] [3] therein, he

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[12] According to the *Hypostasis of the Archons* 87,7-10 "Pistis Sophia established each of his (Yaldabaoth's) offspring in conformity with its power after the pattern (*tupos*) of the realms that are above . . ."; cf. *On the Origin of the World* 102,2-5: "they (Yaldabaoth's offspring) were born androgynous, consistent with the immortal pattern (*tupos*) that existed before them, according to the will of Pistis." In the *Gospel of the Egyptians* (III 68,5 ff. / IV 56,22 ff.) and *Trimorphic Protennoia* (39,13 ff.), it is the "Fourth Luminary" Eleleth, not Sophia, who is responsible for the creation of the world and the origin of Yaldabaoth.

[13] The acts described in *Timaeus* 39e: "Whatsoever forms intellect beholds the ideas resident in the truly living being in their kinds and numbers, such and so many as exist therein he planned (διενοήθη) that the universe should contain," are distributed between the Invisible Spirit and the pleroma as the truly living being, the Autogenes Child as the intellect, and Sophia as the discursive planner, as in Numenius, frg. 22 [des Places].

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> created the world. [4] With a reflection of a reflection [5] he worked upon the world, [6] and then even the reflection of [7] the appearance was taken from him. But [8] Sophia was given a place of rest [9] in exchange for her repentance. [10] In consequence, because there was within her no [11] pure, original image, [12] either pre-existing in him or that had [13] already come to be through him, he [14] used his imagination and fashioned the remainder, [14] for the image belonging to Sophia [16] is always corrupt [and] [17] deceptive. But the Archon—[since he simulates] [18] and embodies by [pursuing the image] [19] because of the superabundance [that inclined downward]—looked [20] downward."

Like Plato's Demiurge, the Archon of creation here has the task of acting the role of "reason persuading necessity." He "[sows] [from his] reason," which turns out to be only his imagination. While Plato's Demiurge looks above to the paradigmatic living being and the forms therein (*Timaeus* 39e), the Archon can only look down; he is unable to see the transcendent, eternal ideas. In Platonic terms, he can only chase after fleeting and dim reflections of the *images* of whatever forms have been projected into the dark receptacle of matter, not the true forms themselves.

3. *Plato's "Lesser Deities" and the Creation of the First Human*

In effect, the Sethian accounts of the world creator constitute a kind of gnostic "creative misprision"[14] of the very Platonic exegetical template borrowed from the *Timaeus* in an attempt to solve protological enigmas raised not only by *Genesis*, but by the *Timaeus* itself! The gnostic re-reading of both Genesis and the *Timaeus* entailed parallel demotions: just as the Jewish creator God is subordinated to an even higher supreme deity, so also the generous, rational Demiurge of the *Timaeus* is interpreted in terms of his lower subordinates, the "younger gods," as a jealous agent of irrational necessity.

Pierre Boyancé and Roelof van den Broek have argued that the creative role of the planetary rulers in many gnostic systems is easily derivable from Plato's statements concerning the lesser, "younger deities" (νέοι θεοί, παῖδες) of the *Timaeus* (41a-42e). Having constructed the cosmic soul and body, the entirely good Demiurge fashions a slightly less pure mixture of divine and immortal substance left over from the ingredients of the cosmic Soul. After dividing this into single souls, each of which he transplants into a single star, he assigns the younger gods the task of enclosing these

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[14] The phrase is from H. Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1983), 62.

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immortal and rational souls into human bodies (41a-42e).[15] Just as the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* commands the younger gods to fabricate the mortal human soul and body (42e-92c), in the *Apocryphon of John* (II 15,1-29), the lower creator assigns the task of creating Adam to his archontic authorities. When the image of the divine "First Human" is projected upon the chaotic sea of primordial matter, it is the equivalent of these younger gods, now conceived as Yaldabaoth's fellow archons who beckon one another (in the longer version it is Yaldabaoth himself who beckons): "Let us create a human after the image of God and after our likeness." In the *Apocryphon of John* (11,22-12,33), Yaldabaoth grants his seven authorities or "kings" certain "powers" to control the planetary spheres; they are derived, however, *not* from the pure and immortal luminous power he stole from his mother Sophia—the rough equivalent of the "indivisible and ever constant" (*Tim.* 35a) ingredient of Plato's cosmic soul—but from Yaldabaoth's own fire.

But even in the *Timaeus*, the altogether reasonable Demiurge's positive intentions are hindered by another negative element that Plato introduces in the second main section of the dialogue (47e-68d): the works of "Necessity" or the "errant cause" (47e-48a) as opposed to the "divine" cause (cf. 68e-69a). It is this element of irrational Necessity that especially enters into the work of the younger gods whom the Demiurge commissions to fashion the mortal bodies of humans and to append certain *necessary* mortal additions to the human soul (42de).

> [42a] And when, by virtue of *Necessity* (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) they (immortal human souls) should be implanted in bodies, and their bodies are subject to influx and efflux, these results would *necessarily* follow (ἀναγκαῖον εἴη): firstly, *sensation* that is innate and common to all proceeding from violent *passions*; secondly, *desire* mingled with *pleasure* and pain; and besides these, *fear* and *anger* [42b] and all such emotions as are naturally allied therewith, and all such as are of a different and opposite character.

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[15] P. Boyancé, "Dieu cosmique et dualisme: Les archontes et Platon," in *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo*, 340-86. According to R. van den Broek ("The Creation of Adam's Psychic Body," in *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity* [NHMS 39; Leiden: Brill, 1996], 67-85, esp. 67 and note 1) G. Quispel ("The Demiurge in the *Apocryphon of John*," in *Nag Hammadi and Gnosis. Papers Read at the First International Congress on Coptology*, ed. R. McL. Wilson [NHS 14; Leiden: Brill 1978], 30), observing that Jewish heretics and later the Gnostics claimed "that the world was created by a lower demiurge," mistakenly claimed that in the *Apocryphon of John* the human body was fashioned directly by the demiurge.

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According to the *Timaeus*, when the younger gods cast the immortal part of the soul into a material vessel comprised of the four elements, it becomes completely disordered and confused:

> *Timaeus* [42e5] So He, then, having given all these commands, resumed His accustomed state. Meanwhile his children heeded their Father's command and obeyed it. They took the immortal principle of the mortal living creature, and imitating their own Maker, they borrowed from the cosmos portions of fire and earth and water and air, [43a] as if meaning to pay them back, and the portions so taken they cemented together. . . . [43a6] Thus bound within a mighty river, the souls neither mastered it nor were mastered, but with violence they rolled along and were rolled along themselves, [43b] so that the whole of the living creature was moved, but in such a random way that its progress was *disorderly* and *irrational*. It became subject to all the six linear motions, straying in all six directions, forwards and backwards, right to left, and up and down. For while the flood which foamed in and streamed out to supply nourishment was immense, still greater was the tumult produced [43c] within each creature as a result of the colliding bodies, when the body of a creature happened to meet and collide with the fire of some external body, or with a solid lump of earth or liquid flow of water, or the sudden blast of driving winds. And the motions due to all these causes rushed through the body and impinged upon the Soul and for that reason were then as today termed Sensations. Moreover, since at that time they were causing constant and widespread motion, reinforced by the perpetually flowing stream, [43d] they violently upset the orbits of the (human) soul, totally blocking the orbit of the Same, and by flowing contrary to it robbed it of its control and orderly motion, and disordered the orbit of the Other so that . . . [43d7] they were twisted in every direction, causing [43e] every possible kind of fracture and disruption to their circles, which barely held together one with another, and although they moved, they moved irrationally, now in reverse, now sideways, now upside down.

On the other hand, in the *Apocryphon of John* (II 19,11-14), the psychic entity initially fitted together by the angels and demons remains completely motionless and inert (II 19,10-33, as in Gen 2:7); only after it has been vivified with the luminous power of Sophia does it undergo the material incarnation that results in this chaotic and uncoordinated motion.

In the third and final section of the *Timaeus* (68e-92c), Plato describes the addition of mortal psychic appendages to the immortal soul and its incarnation into a mortal physical body as a blending of divine and rational elements with certain necessary and irrational elements. This section begins (68b-72d) with the younger deities' construction of mortal psychic appendages to the immortal part of the human soul, in particular the passions that will comprise the mortal—the spirited and appetitive—parts of the human soul:

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> *Timaeus* [69c] He himself (the demiurge) acted as the fashioner of things divine, but he commanded his own engendered sons to execute the structure of the mortal things. And receiving the immortal principle of soul, they, imitating him (the demiurge), encased it in a mortal, physical globe with the entire body as its vehicle. And they built on to it another mortal part [69d] containing *terrible* and *necessary passions*: first *pleasure*, the chief incitement evil; next, *pains* that recoil from the good; besides these, *rashness* and *fear*—both foolish counselors—and then obstinate *anger* and seductive *hope*. Blending these with *irrational sensation* and all-daring *lust*, they provided the mortal soul with its *necessary* equipment.

According to the lengthy citation from a certain *Book of Zoroaster* in the longer version of the *Apocryphon of John*, virtually the same set of passions—pain, pleasure, lust and fear—is supplied, not directly by the seven planetary powers, but by four demons:

> **II 18** [14] The four [15] chief demons are:
> Ephememphi who [16] belongs to *pleasure*;
> Yōkō the one who belongs to *lust*; [17]
> Nenentōphni is the one who belongs to *pain*;
> Blaomēn [18] is the one who belongs to *fear*;
> And the mother of all these is [19] Esthēnsis-ouch-epi-ptoē.
> Now from these four [20] demons, the passions came into being. [21] And from *pain*: envy, jealousy, [22] pain, trouble, strife, [23] callousness, anxiety, mourning, [24] and the rest. From *pleasure* comes [25] much evil and vain [26] conceit and similar things. [27] From *lust*: anger, wrath, [28] [bitterness], bitter passion and [29] unfulfilled desire, and similar things. [30] From *fear*: panic, [31] pleading, anguish, shame. All these [32] are like virtues and vices. [33] But the thought of their truth is Anaiō, [34] i.e., the head of the material soul. **19** [1] She exists with the seven senses Ouch-epi-ptoē.

A bit later in the *Timaeus* (73b-76e), Plato proceeds to discuss the actual physical construction of the human body, whose fundamental components are marrow (and brain, to which the soul is anchored), bones, sinews, flesh, skin, hair, nails, and finally (80d-81e)—under the topic of the irrigational and respiratory system—blood.[16] While the *Timaeus* regards these components as the *physical* constituents of the human body, the *Apocryphon of John* regards them as constituents of Adam's *psychic* body. With a few variations

[16] Roelof van den Broek ("The Creation of Adam's Psychic Body," in *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity* [NHMS 39; Leiden: Brill, 1996], 67-85) has shown in detail how this section of the *Timaeus* underlies the *Apocryphon of John*'s account of the creation of the earthly Adam (BG 41,12-42,10 + 43,6-44,18 + 48,14-51,1; II 11,4-6.26-35 + 12,10-13,1 + 15,1-19,14).

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in order, these psychic components are—except for the nails—the same as those in the *Timaeus*:[17]

> **II 15** [6] And [7] each one of the authorities contributed a feature to his (= the creature's) [8] psychical being [9] from the pattern of the image that <they> had seen. <They> created an entity [10] after the likeness of the First Perfect Human. [11] And they said, "Let us call him [12] 'Adam,' so that his name might be [13] for us a luminous power." And the powers began: [14]
> The first, Goodness (BG & III = Divinity), created [15] a bone-soul;
> the second, Providence (BG = *chrēstos*, Lordship), [16] created a sinew-soul;
> the third, [17] Divinity (BG = Fire, III = *chrēstos*) , created a flesh-soul; [18]
> the fourth is Lordship (BG & III = Providence); it created [19] a marrow-soul (BG adds: "and the entire foundation of the body"; for Plato marrow is the starting point, ἀρχή, of the human frame, *Timaeus* 73b; *On the Origin of the World* 114,33-35 has "brain and marrow");
> the fifth is Kingdom; [20] it created a blood-soul (Plato discusses blood later at *Timaeus* 80-81e);
> the sixth is [21] Jealousy (BG & III = Understanding); it created a skin-soul; [22]
> the seventh is Understanding (BG & III = Wisdom); it created [23] a <hair>-soul.

When the divine Mother causes the unwitting Yaldabaoth to inspire the completely lifeless body with the luminous power stolen from his mother Sophia, it suddenly moves and becomes luminous, with a greater intelligence than its creators. Out of jealousy the chief archon casts the psychic body out of Paradise into the lowest region of matter and entombs it in a material formation made out of the four elements fire, earth, water and air (conceived as flaming wind or spirit). At this point Adam becomes a mortal man, whose only hope of survival lay in propagating his kind through sexual intercourse.

> **II 20** [32] When they (the authorities) looked up, they saw [33] that his intellect was superior, and they devised [34] a plan with the entire archontic [35] and angelic company. They took fire and earth **21** [1] and water and mixed them together [2] with the four flaming winds, and beat them [3] together, and created a great [4] *disturbance.* And they brought him into the shadow [5] of death, so that they might remold him, [6] from the earth and water and fire [7] and

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[17] Van den Broek (*ibid.* 74) suggests that the application of Plato's melothesia of the physical human body to its psychic elements is due to Middle Platonic doctrines of the descent of the soul through the planetary spheres from each of which it receives a characteristic that comprises its a pneumatic vehicle or astral body, as in the Hermetic *Poimandres* 25 and Numenius (frg. 52 Leemans, *apud* Macrobius' *Commentary of the Dream of Scipio* I.11,12-12,18).

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wind that are from matter—i.e., [8] the *ignorance* of darkness and *desire* [9] and their Counterfeit Spirit—which [10] is the cave of the remolding of the body [11] with which the robbers clothed the human, [12] the chain of forgetfulness. And he became a [13] mortal human.

4. *Providence and Fate*

Given the *Apocryphon of John*'s equation of the supreme divine Mother Barbelo with universal Providence, it is curious that it also identifies the first of the authorities contributing to Adam's psychic body as "providence" (πρόνοια). But a similar distinction occurs in the *Timaeus*. Near the beginning of the first main section of the *Timaeus* (29d-47e), it is said that "this universe came to be in very truth through God's Providence" (30bc), while toward its end, it is implied that the generation of the human soul and bodies in their discrete parts came about through the agency and *providence* of the (younger) gods (44c). There are thus two providences, one exercised by the Demiurge on behalf of the entire universe—the macrocosm—and another providence to be exercised by the younger gods on behalf of the construction of the mortal human soul and body—the microcosm. In addition to these, there are also the "decrees of Fate" (νόμους τε τοὺς εἱμαρμένους, 41e) and the works of Necessity (42a) that equitably govern their initial incarnation of human souls.

In the *Apocryphon of John*, primary Providence is none other than the supreme Mother Barbelo who, as the divine First Thought, contains the divine intelligence and manifests its Ideas as Aeons. In the *Apocryphon of John* II 28,5-32, the equivalent of secondary providence—"the changeable chain" of Fate—is a kind of negative providence begotten by these same seven "powers" through their adultery with Sophia as a prelude to the flood:

II 28 [11] He (Yaldabaoth) devised a plan [12] with his authorities who were his powers. And [13] together they committed adultery with Wisdom, and from them, like a wound, [14] Fate was begotten, [15] i.e., the final, changeable chain. [16] And it is because [17] they change into one another that (Fate) is diverse. And it is oppressive and [18] perverse, this with which [19] were mixed gods and angels and demons [20] and all the generations to this day. [21] For from that Fate [22] <appeared> every wickedness and [23] injustice and blasphemy and chain [24] of forgetfulness and ignorance and every [25] burdensome commandment, and burdensome sins [26] and great fears. And in this way, [27] the whole creation was blind, [28] so that they might not recognize the God who is [29] above them all. And because of the chain of forgetfulness, [30] their sins were hidden. For they were bound with [31] measures and times and seasons, [32] since (Fate) is master over all things.

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While in the *Timaeus* secondary Providence is diligently exercised by the secondary gods by creating, governing, and preserving mortal affairs in an orderly fashion, in the *Apocryphon of John*, secondary providence is evil. It is the source of chaotic disorder and ignorance and ultimately assists in its own undoing by provoking salvific intervention of the higher Providence—Barbelo—into the realm of mortals to raise her offspring into the "honored place."

In these observations, I have tried to show that several features of the *Apocryphon of John* and related Sethian treatises are based upon a gnostic reading of the *Timaeus*, which serves as the master text for the cosmological section of the *Apocryphon of John* (II 6,33-19,10) and as an exegetical template that supplies the correct interpretation of the Genesis protology offered by Moses, the undiscerning prophet of the biblical creator God. Some constitute actual parodies of the *Timaeus*: the Sethian anthropogonic melothesia, the doctrine of a dual providence, a demiurgical world creator who fabricates according to a reflected divine paradigm which he cannot directly see. On the other hand, there are also positive appropriations of the *Timaeus*: the Sethian doctrine of the primal triad Father, Mother, Child trinity, as well as the association of the Mother Barbelo with certain positive features of the receptacle of becoming and of Sophia with certain of its enigmatic features, ultimately expressed in terms of dual Mother figures.

I now turn to consider a distinct group of Sethian texts that, except for their sporadic retention of such figures of the heavenly Adam, Seth, and the seed of Seth, display no interest in Jewish, Christian, or biblical themes—including the biblical protology—at all. And, while the influence of the *Timaeus* remains occasionally evident, the central dialogue of reference seems to have shifted to the *Parmenides* as a means of resolving the ancient dilemma of how multiplicity could have arisen from absolute unity. Given the various competing and universalizing monotheisms of the late second century, in which the most notable defining criterion of sectarian boundaries was made according to one's notion of the One God, the issue of absolutely unitary first principles and their transcendence inevitably gained a nearly overwhelming social and personal relevance, especially among philosophically-minded sectarians like the Sethian gnostics.

III. *Sethian Interpretations of the* Parmenides

One may divide the eleven Sethian treatises into two subgroups precisely in view of the path to saving enlightenment offered in each. For the larger

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and probably earlier group of treatises—the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, the *Apocalypse of Adam*, the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, *Thought of Norea*, *Melchizedek*, and the *Gospel of the Egyptians*—saving enlightenment is conferred through a biblically-inspired horizontal sequence of temporally successive earthly *descents* on the part of a heavenly savior/revealer sent by the divine Mother of the All to awaken humans to the nature and reality of the upper world. The other group—consisting of the four treatises *Zostrianos*, *Allogenes*, the *Three Steles of Seth*, and *Marsanes*—conceives saving enlightenment to be achieved through a Platonically-inspired vertical *ascent* of a visionary through a succession of supramundane realms and mental states during which one becomes assimilated to ever higher levels of being and insight.[18] For reasons that will become apparent, these four treatises form a distinctive group that can be called "the Platonizing Sethian treatises."

Each of the Platonizing Sethian texts commemorates the ecstatic ascent of a single exceptional individual such as the biblical Seth, Zostrianos (the alleged uncle or grandfather of Zoroaster), Allogenes ("one of another kind, race," a play on Seth as the σπέρμα ἕτερον of Gen 4:25), or Marsanes (who may have been a contemporary Sethian prophet). The various stages of these ascents are articulated according to an ever-ascending hierarchy of transcendent aeonic levels whose ontology is typical of contemporary Middle Platonic metaphysical treatises. The metaphysical hierarchy of the Platonizing Sethian treatises is strikingly similar, consisting of four ontological levels. Uppermost is a supreme realm altogether beyond being occupied by a supreme unitary deity, the Triple Powered Invisible Spirit; below this one finds an atemporal, intelligible realm of pure determinate being occupied by a tripartite divine Intellect, the Aeon of Barbelo, encompassing three subaeons: Kalyptos, Protophanes, and Autogenes. In turn, Autogenes presides over the four Luminaries who define the Self-generated Aeons that contain the souls of those who have achieved complete enlightenment and eternal stability. Below these are three lower psychic realms—the Repentance, Sojourn, and the aeonic Antitypes—characterized by time and motion that contain souls still in the process of transmigration. Finally, at the bottom

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[18] Ultimately inspired by a combination to *Theaetetus* 176b with the vision of absolute Beauty in Plato's *Symposium* 210a-212a and of the true light in the parable of the cave in *Republic* VII 514-517a, and perhaps even the vision of Parmenides (*Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 227-246 Diels-Kranz). See my "The Gnostic Threefold Path to Enlightenment: The Ascent of Mind and the Descent of Wisdom," *Novum Testamentum* 22 (1980), 324-351, esp. 341-351.

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of the hierarchy lies the physical realm of "Nature." In this scheme, Sethianism has become a form of mythological Platonism.

1. *The Platonic Milieu of the Platonizing Sethian Treatises*

Among all eleven Sethian treatises, three can be rather precisely dated. One of these is a version of the *Apocryphon of John*, whose introductory theogony and cosmogony was summarized by Irenaeus (*Adversus Haereses* I.29) around 175-180 CE. The other two are the Platonizing treatises *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes*. In his *Life of Plotinus* 16, Porphyry tells us that these two apocalypses (and perhaps also a version of *Marsanes*) circulated in Plotinus' philosophical seminar in Rome during the years 244-265 CE, and that one in particular, *Zostrianos*, was scrupulously critiqued by Amelius and himself.[19] The record of Plotinus' debates with the proponents of these treatises is contained in his *Großschrift*, an originally continuous treatise that included *Enneads* III, 8 [30], V, 8 [31], V, 5 [32], and II, 9 [33], whose concluding section contains Plotinus' most pointed antignostic critique, some of whose details are clearly directed at *Zostrianos*.[20] It is also likely that these

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[19] "There were in his time and circle many Christians and others, and sectarians who had ventured away from the old philosophy, men of the school of Adelphios and Aquilinus who possessed a great many treatises of Alexander the Libyan and Philokomos and Demostratos and Lydos (or: Demostratos of Libya), and used to adduce apocalypses by Zoroaster and Zostrianos and Nikotheos and Allogenes and Messos and other people of the kind; they deceived themselves and many others, alleging that Plato had not penetrated into the depths of intelligible reality. Hence Plotinus often attacked their position in his lectures and wrote the treatise to which we have given the title Against the Gnostics (*Ennead* II,9); he left it to us to assess what he passed over. Amelius went to forty volumes in writing against the book of Zostrianos. I, Porphyry, wrote a considerable number of refutations of the book of Zoroaster, which I showed to be entirely spurious and modern, made up by the sectarians to convey the impression that the doctrines which they had chosen to hold in honor were those of the ancient Zoroaster" (trans. A.H. Armstrong with slight modifications).

[20] While Plotinus does not seem to attack the general schema of either the unfolding of or the reascent to the divine world offered in the Platonizing Sethian treatises, nonetheless he accepts some specific elements and rejects others. He voices no objection to their designation of the supreme deity as the Invisible Spirit, nor to *Allogenes'* notion of learned ignorance (III, 8 [30] 9-10; NHC XI 59,30-32; 60,8-12; 61,2-3; 61,17-19; cf. Porphyry, *Sent.* 25-26; anonymous *Parmenides Commentary*, frgs. II & IV), nor to the notion that spiritual beings are simultaneously present in their entirety as "all together" in the Intellect (*Ennead* V, 8 [31] 7-9; *Zostrianos* VIII 21, 87, 115-16), nor the idea of the traversal of Life from the One into the Intellect (*Ennead* III, 8 [30] 11; VI, 7 [38] 17; *Zostrianos* VII 17,6-22; 66,14-67,3; *Allogenes* XI 49,5-21). On the other hand,

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gnostic proponents continued to be Plotinus' subtextual interlocutors up through his very latest treatises (at least through Ennead I, 8 [51]).

With the Platonizing Sethian treatises, we are at the cusp of the shift from what is known as Middle Platonism to the Neoplatonism of Plotinus and his successors.[21] For the Middle Platonists, the principal Platonic dialogue of reference was the *Timaeus*, interpreted to reveal three fundamental principles: 1) The supreme principle was God, identified with the supreme Form of the Good from the *Republic* and the demiurge of the *Timaeus* conceived as a universal Intellect. 2) Next was the Paradigm of the *Timaeus*, conceived as the intelligible realm of Forms, perhaps identical with God's thoughts, existing either within the divine Intellect or occupying a distinct realm external and subjacent to it. By contemplating these, God confers order upon 3) the third and lowest principle, Matter, a pre-existing stuff mysteriously agitated within its matrix, the receptacle of the *Timaeus*.[22]

Plotinus rejects: (1) the strong partitioning of Intellect (*Ennead* II, 9 [33] 1; cf. III, 9 [13] 1) in the manner both of Numenius and of *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes*; (2) the idea that *Sophia* is derivative and alien (*Zostrianos* VIII pages 9-10; cf. *Ennead* V, 8 [31] 5), or that Soul or *Sophia* declined and put on human bodies (cf. *Zostrianos* VIII 27,9-12), or that *Sophia* or the mother illumined the darkness, producing an image in matter, which in turn produces an image of the image (*Zostrianos* VIII 9.17-10,20 and *Ennead* II, 9 (33) 10.19-33; 11,14-30; but see Plotinus' own version of this in III, 9 [13] 3), (3) the idea of a demiurge revolting from its matter and whose activity gives rise to "repentances" (μετάνοιαι), "copies" (ἀντίτυποι) and "sojourns" (παροικήσεις), *Ennead* II, 9 [33] 6; the "alien earth", II, 9 [33] 11; cf. *Zostrianos* VIII 5,10-29; 8,9-16; 12,4-21), (4) the unnecessary multiplication of Hypostases, (5) the notion of secondary "knowledge of (a yet higher) knowledge" (*Ennead* II, 9 [33] 1; cf. *Zostrianos* VIII 82,1-13;119,12-13), and (6) magical incantations (*Ennead* II, 9 [33], 4; cf. *Zostrianos* VIII 52,85-88; 127; *Allogenes* XI 53,32-55,11; *Steles Seth* VII 126,1-17; *Marsanes* X 25,17-32,5). In general, Plotinus' objections to Gnostic cosmogonies are based on his perception that they feature entities (such as Sophia or a world-creator) that produce inferior products by failing to adequately contemplate superior entities, thereby introducing discontinuities into what ought to be a continuous ontological hierarchy. Unfortunately, the doctrines criticized by Plotinus in the *Großschrift* may not always provide evidence sufficient to identify his opponents with any precision, since he may have in mind doctrines of several such opponents, not only those of the Sethians, but also of Valentinians, Christians, or even Numenius and his followers.

[21] See, e.g., Luc Brisson, "Qualche aspetto della storia del Platonismo," *Elenchos* 20 (1999), 145-69 and "The Platonic Background in the *Apocalypse of Zostrianos*: Numenius and *Letter II* attributed to Plato," in *The Tradition of Platonism. Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, ed. J. J. O'Cleary (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 1999), 173-188.

[22] Thus Aetius, *De placitis reliquiae* p. 288,1-6 Diels (*Stobaei excerpta* 1.10.16a5): Πλάτων Ἀρίστωνος τρεῖς ἀρχάς, τὸν θεὸν τὴν ὕλην τὴν ἰδέαν, ὑφ' οὗ ἐξ οὗ πρὸς ὅ. ὁ δὲ θεὸς

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a. *Neopythagorean Platonism*

Sometime during the first and second centuries, Platonists such as Moderatus and Numenius were attracted by certain Neopythagorean doctrines espoused by such figures as Eudorus and Thrasyllus, aspects of which probably stemmed ultimately from Old Academicians like Speusippus. They were led to reconcile Old Academic traditions about Plato's written and reputed oral teaching concerning the origin of universal multiplicity from the interaction of two supreme principles, the Limit and the Unlimited of the *Philebus*[23] with Parmenides' monistic doctrine of the ultimate unity of all things in the One. From this they concluded that the multiplicity of both ideal and sensible realities was derived from the interaction of a transcendent Monad and Dyad, whose origin was in turn attributed to a supreme One beyond them.[24]

It is at this time that the *Parmenides*, with its thoroughgoing exploration of the nature of ultimate Unity, gradually comes to supplement or even supplant the *Timaeus* as the primary dialogue of reference in the search for ultimate principles.[25] The "hypotheses" occupying its second half could be identified with a Neopythagorean hierarchy of hypostatic principles:[26] 1) a supreme One beyond being; 2) a second One or Monad, paradoxically conceived as a dyad of unity and determinate being identified as a Middle Platonic Intellect containing multiple Forms; 3) a third hypostasis[27] where multiple otherness undergoing change merely participates in unity and thus can account for the motion typical of Soul or the sensible uni-

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νοῦς ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου, ἡ δὲ ὕλη τὸ ὑποκείμενον γενέσει καὶ φθορᾷ, ἰδέα δὲ οὐσία ἀσώματος ἐν τοῖς νοήμασι καὶ ταῖς φαντασίαις τοῦ θεοῦ.

[23] Or in Aristotle's terminology, the One and the Great and the Small, or the One and the Indefinite Dyad.

[24] Cf. A.-J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, Volume IV: *Le Dieu inconnu et la gnose* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1954), chs. II and III, esp. 36-40; H. J. Krämer, *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik* (Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner, 1967), 320-21, 330-35; J. M. Rist, "Monism: Plotinus and some Predecessors," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 69 (1965), *passim*; J. M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 120-21, 126-129, 342-61.

[25] See, e.g., Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* I.7-8.

[26] Such as those attributed to Eudorus, *apud* Simplicius, *In Aristotelis physicorum* 9.181,10-30 [Diels] and Alexander Polyhistor *apud* Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* VIII24.7-25.10, and perhaps the testimonia on Archaenetus, Philolaus and Brotinus *apud* Syrianus, *in Metaph.* 165,33-166,6 [Kroll] and Pseudo-Archytas *apud* Stobaeus, *Anthologium* I.41.2,1-50 = 1.278-9 [Wachsmuth].

[27] Taking in *Parm.* 155e5 (ἔτι δὴ τὸ τρίτον λέγωμεν) as designating a distinct third hypothesis rather than as part of the second hypothesis.

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verse, and so on, ending with the realm of pure disordered matter, identifiable with the *Timaeus*' receptacle. Such an "episodic" scheme appears to have been anticipated already in the Old Academic thought of Speusippus.[28] The three highest of these hypostatic entities could also be recognized in the three kings mentioned in the pseudonymous second Platonic Letter (*Letter II* 312e), perhaps composed in these same Neopythagorean circles during the first century.

b. *Moderatus*

Thus according to Simplicius (*In Phys.* 230,34-231,5 in part citing Porphyry's lost *On Matter*), Moderatus proposed a hierarchy of four entities: 1) a First One beyond being who actually seems to be generated from 2) a Second One that—according to Porphyry—is a "unitary Logos" that initiates ontogenesis by depriving itself of the unitary aspects of its multiple Forms.[29]

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[28] Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 12 1090b19-20. Iamblichus, *De communi mathematica scientia* 4 (15,5-17,23 Festa) attributes to Speusippus a five-level universe: the transcendent principles of One and Multiplicity (Plato's Indefinite Dyad?), the determinate being of the mathematicals and geometricals, the world soul (third level) and the sensible world, both animate (fourth level) and inanimate (fifth level). According to J. Dillon, ("Speusippus and the Ontological Interpretation of the Parmenides" unpublished paper for the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar on "Rethinking Plato's Parmenides and its Platonic, Gnostic and Patristic Reception" November 22, 2003, pp. 3-10), Proclus' (*In Parmenidem* VII 38-40 Klibansky = frg. 48 Tarán) citation of Speusippus' testimony concerning the "ancients" (i.e., Pythagoreans) who held that "if one postulates the One, in itself, conceived as separated and alone, without anything else, with no other element added to it (cf. Plato, *Parmenides* 143A6-9), nothing else would come into existence; and so they introduced the Indefinite Dyad as the principle of beings" shows that already Speusippus had adopted a "metaphysical" interpretation of the first and second hypotheses of the *Parmenides*, regarding its second hypothesis as "portraying the interaction of the One and the indefinite Dyad to generate first Number, and ultimately the whole ordered universe" according to the process depicted in 143C-144A, where "the union of the One with Being is a process of dyadic division, addition and multiplication that leads to Number."

[29] Simplicius, *In Phys.* 231,7-10: "The Unitary Logos (i.e., the "second One) . . . intending to produce from itself the origin of beings, by self-deprivation made room for [ms.] Quantity (ποσότης), having deprived (στερήσας) it (Quantity) of all its (the Unitary Logos') proportions and Forms." The entire passage is cited in Appendix I, p. 54. By retracting unity from the multiplicity of the Forms conceived as a prefigurative quantity already seminally present in itself, the unitary Logos makes space for pure Quantity (cf. the indefinite dyad) to serve as a passive receptacle to receive the Forms. This self-deprivation seems to refer to the similar process of regression ascribed to Moderatus in Stobaeus' *Anthologium* (I, 8,1-11, p. 21 Wachsmuth), according to which "number is a collection of monads, or a progression of multiplicity (προποδισμὸς πλήθους) beginning

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Apparently, this self-deprivation yields not only the transcendent unity of the First One, but also makes room for pure Quantity—perhaps the mere plurality of the Forms—deprived of all unity and proportion as a sort of relative non-being that could be identified with the receptacle of the *Timaeus*.[30] Next, there is 3) a third entity that merely participates the first two and thus is both one and many, perhaps identifiable as the cosmic Soul (or the sensible cosmos itself), which is apparently followed by 4) a fourth realm as the sensible reflections (κατ' ἔμφασιν) of the Forms in 5) an apparent fifth realm of absolute non-being, i.e., Matter as a mere "shadow" of the quantitative non-being left behind by the unitary Logos. Since—assuming Simplicius' testimony can be trusted[31]—Moderatus evidently designated the two highest of these principles as a First One and a Second One, it appears that his reading of the *Parmenides* induced him

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from a monad, and regression terminating at the monad (ἀναποδισμὸς εἰς μονάδα): monads delimit Quantity, which is whatever has been deprived and is left remaining and stable when multiplicity is diminished by the subtraction of each number." This process of the generation of number is very likely indebted to Plato's description of the generation of number in *Parmenides* 143C-144A. According to Syrianus (*In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria*, 151.14-27 Kroll), Moderatus said that the One was a principle, although he derived it from the Monad, which was generated temporally prior (γενέσει) to the supreme One, even though the One was treated later in account (λόγῳ). Although the one functioned as a formal cause for the monad, presumably by giving it numerical form, the monad has a certain priority because it underlies number as if it were its material substrate.

[30] Thus ontogenesis is not a hierarchical emanation of all subsequent being from an absolutely simple first principle from highest to lowest; it instead starts at the second level with the fission of the unitary Logos into opposite principles of formal unity and indeterminate plurality that interact to generate all subsequent reality. Cf. the similar process in frgs. 3-5 of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, where the Father snatches away his own fire or hypostatical identity (ὁ πατὴρ ἥρπασσεν ἑαυτόν, οὐδ' ἐν ἑῇ δυνάμει νοερᾷ κλείσας ἴδιον πῦρ) to yield pure indeterminate power or potential to be informed by his intellective power on a lower level. Evidently, along the lines of *Parmenides* 142b-e, the unity of the unitary Logos becomes the First One, while the duality of its "being one" becomes the second One whose forms will be imposed on the indeterminate quantity for which it has made room, producing an arrangement rather like that of Eudorus (*apud* Simplicius, *In Phys.* 181.10-30 Diels): a supreme One (ἕν) above lower pair of principles, the Monad and the (indefinite) Dyad.

[31] See however the doubts raised by Philippe Hoffman ("Simplicius' reading of Moderatus via Porphyry (Simplicius, *in Phys.* 230,34 ff.)" and J. Noel Hubler, ("Moderatus, E. R. Dodds, and the Development of Neoplatonist Emanation") during the November 2003 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar, "Rethinking Plato's Parmenides and its Platonic, Gnostic and Patristic Reception."

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to make this elaborate Neopythagorean combination of the Middle Platonic three-level scheme of God, Model, and Matter with the three kings of *Letter II* representing God, the Forms, and the sensible universe or its Soul. The result was a series of four or five entities that could serve to interpret the first five hypotheses of the *Parmenides* as signifying the One, Intellect, the realm of souls, the sensible universe, and Matter.[32] Thus, the three principles of Middle Platonism, God, Model, and Matter—apparently supplemented by a psychic and physical realm—are subordinated to a supreme principle, the One beyond being.[33]

c. *Numenius*

In its appropriation of both the *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*, Moderatus' account of ontogenesis by which the Second One gives rise to both unity and multiplicity through self-privation seems thoroughly Neopythagorean. By contrast, Calcidius testifies that Numenius, although a Neopythagorean, rejected the notion of a generation of dyadic multiplicity by the self-privation of the Monad.[34] Although the *Parmenides* seems to have influenced his explanation of the nature of pure being (frgs. 5-6 des Places),[35] Numenius still relies principally on the *Timaeus* to articulate his system of three Gods or Intellects. The first God is a static Intellect, modeled on the *Timaeus*'

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[32] Cf. the five-level universe Iamblichus attributes to Speusippus outlined in note 28 above.

[33] In their survey of the interpretation of *Letter II* in the introduction to volume 2 of *Proclus: Théologie Platonicienne* (6 vols. [Collection des universités de France; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968-1997], II.lviii-lix) Saffrey and Westerink distinguish two schools of interpretation, the "Syrian" school of Amelius, Iamblichus, and Theodore, who identify the three kings with three intellects or demiurges that are subordinated to the One, and the "Roman" school of Plotinus and Porphyry (preceded by Moderatus and followed by Julian and Proclus), who identified the first "King of all things" with the One. Although he does not posit a supreme One above the triad, Numenius is clearly a precursor of the Syrian school.

[34] Cf. Numenius frg 52 des Places (= Calcidius, In Tim. c. 293): "(Numenius) says that Pythagoras applied the name Unity to God, but to Matter, the name Dyad. This Dyad is said to be indeterminate when ungenerated, but determinate when generated. . . . (While yet) unorganized and ungenerated, that (dyad) must be considered as coeval with the God by whom it was organized. But some Pythagoreans (e.g., Moderatus) had not correctly apprehended this statement, still claiming that this indeterminate and unlimited Dyad is itself brought forth from the single Unity, as it withdraws from its singular nature and departs into the condition of the Dyad."

[35] I.e., as an incorporeal, Being has no change, movement, difference, location, or time.

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paradigmatic "truly living being." Since he transcends discursive thinking, he gives rise to a second Intellect below him which he "uses" (frgs. 20-22 des Places) for this purpose. This second Intellect is the actual demiurge: according to fragment 11, he is unified in so far as he turns toward the first Intellect, but when he becomes preoccupied with unifying the duality of Matter according to the Forms he perceives in the First God, his contact with Matter sunders him into distinct second and third Gods. According to fragment 16, this demiurge apparently alternates between an Intellect-in-contemplation and a discursive demiurgical Intellect (who might be considered as the rational aspect of the World Soul).[36]

Although Numenius speaks of a Second and Third God in fragment 11, he nevertheless calls them "One" (εἷς), suggesting that he too (like Moderatus' δεύτερον ἕν and τὸ δὲ τρίτον) may have associated them with the Ones of hypothesis II (142b1-155e4) and what the "ancients" regarded as hypostasis III (155e4-157b4) of the *Parmenides*. According to Proclus (*In Parmenidem* 638,21-36), certain "ancients" took the phrase ἔτι δὴ τὸ τρίτον of *Parmenides* 155e4 to designate a distinct third hypothesis, while most modern scholars argue that the initial ἔτι suggests that this "third" designates, not a separate hypothesis, but merely a third approach to the One of hypothesis two. But on either view, the One of this supposed third hypothesis—which undergoes instantaneous alternation between unity and plurality since it partakes of being when it is one, but when it is not one does not so partake—nevertheless inherits the second hypothesis' essential character of a many-in-one.[37] Thus the One of what was taken to be hypothesis III (155e-157b) and the One of hypothesis II are both many-in-ones: from the point of view of hypothesis II, although also a plurality (142e, 144e), the One nevertheless remains an overall unity, while from the point of view of hypothesis III it alternately becomes one and many (155e).[38] In the same

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[36] See des Places' fragments 11 and 16 (where ἔπειτα seems to imply successive alternation) cited in Appendix II, p. 53. Numenius also posited an irrational world soul, cf. frg. 52 des Places: "The same Numenius praises Plato (cf. Laws 896d-e) for having taught the existence of two world souls, the one being very beneficent, and the other malevolent, namely, matter. For if nature is in even only moderate motion, then must it necessarily be alive and animated, according to the laws of all things whose motion is innate. This (matter) is also the cause and director of the passible part of the soul, which contains something corporeal, mortal and similar to the body, just as the rational part of the soul derives from reason and God. For the world is created out of (a commingling of) God and matter."

[37] See *Parmenides* 156e3-7, cited in Appendix III, p. 55.

[38] Cf. *Parmenides* 155e4: "If the one is such as we have described it, being both one

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way, in fragments 11 and 16 Numenius apparently portrays the demiurgic intellect as alternating between a second contemplative God who participates in the unity of the First God and a third demiurgic God who comes into contact with the plurality of matter. So it seems that Numenius has been influenced, not only the by the *Timaeus* and the second Platonic *Letter*, but quite possibly also by the *Parmenides*' distinction between the absolute Unity of the first hypothesis and the duality of—or alternation between—Unity and Being in the second.

It is in this Neopythagorean metaphysical environment that the *Parmenides* seems to come into its own as a theological treatise, and becomes subjected to various expositions and lemmatic commentaries—such as the anonymous Turin *Commentary* on the *Parmenides*—that attempted to uncover the metaphysical realities concealed in the various hypotheses of its second half. Once Plotinus had based his own metaphysics upon the first three hypotheses of the *Parmenides* read in terms of the three kings of *Letter II*, the way lay open to subsequent Neoplatonists to discover hypostatic equivalents for the *Parmenides*' remaining hypotheses as well.[39] But it is possible

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and many and neither one nor many, and partakes of time, must it not, because one is, sometimes partake of being (i.e., when the second God turns to the First), and again because one is not, sometimes not partake of being (i.e., when he turns to matter)?" and 156b5: "When it becomes one its existence as many is destroyed, and when it becomes many its existence as one is destroyed." See H. Tarrant, *Thrasyllan Platonism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 174, and the passages cited in Appendices II (Numenius) and III (*Parmenides*).

[39] An attempt to flesh out Moderatus' entire metaphysical hierarchy corresponding to the Parmenidean "hypotheses" has been offered by Harold Tarrant (*Thrasyllan Platonism* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, Ch. 6, "The Neopythagorean *Parmenides*"], 148-177, esp. 150-61). Dividing the hypotheses in Neoplatonic fashion by counting 155e4-157b4 ("for a third time") as a distinct third hypothesis to form a series of nine (H1=137c3-142a6; H2=142b1-155e4; H3=155e4-157b4; H4=157b5-159a9; H5=159b1-160b3; H6=160b4-163b5; H7=163b6-164b3; H8=164b4-165e1; H9=165e1-166c6), Tarrant assigns the first eight to the four entities mentioned in Simplicius' citation of Moderatus (*In Phys.* 230.34-231.5) and to the various kinds of matter described in Porphyry's book *On Matter* 2 (*In Phys.* 231.5-231.34) that cites Moderatus' doctrine of the origin of matter as indeterminate Quantity (ποσότης), according to the following hierarchy: (H1) the first One beyond Being; (H2) the second One-Being or Unitary Logos embracing the Forms; (H3) the "third" (One?) that participates the One and the Forms as signifying unified (rational) souls; (H4) Soul (non-rational) in diversity; (H5) archetypal Matter (ποσότης) "left over" when deprived of all the Unitary Logos' λόγοι and εἴδη i.e., the receptacle of the *Timaeus*—whose indeterminacy becomes the determinate quantity (ποσόν) of (H6) corporeal matter when caught by and actually ordered by the Unitary Logos, who imposes—not Forms—but (continuous) geometrical magnitude and (discrete) numerical

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that the detection of three or more Parmenidean hypostases had already occurred to certain of Plotinus' predecessors.

d. *The Sethians*

This shift in the Platonic dialogue of reference is also visible in the Sethian treatises. In mid- to later second-century Sethian treatises like the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, and the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, the cosmology of the *Timaeus* becomes an exegetical template to interpret the Genesis protology, in both negative and positive ways. Negatively, they compromise the supremacy of the Jewish creator God by identifying him with a jealous and ignorant parody of the *Timaeus*' demiurge subordinated to a superior divine model which he must consult, but cannot actually see. Positively, it seems that the very nomenclature of the

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distinction upon it; (H7) the non-existent "shadow" matter in sensibles, incapable of receiving any predicate at all; and (H8) the fourth (mentioned in *In Phys.* 231.2-5 after the "third") and "final nature" (φύσις) consisting, not of any kind of matter, but of phantasms, merely apparent sense-data reflecting the formal properties of already-ordered corporeal matter. Tarrant distributes the psychic realm into two levels on the basis of Moderatus' notion (cited in Porphyry, *Vita Pythag.* 44.8-14) of a One that causes the co-animation (συμπνοία) of both the universe (H3) and of particulars (H4). The distribution of entities in H5-H8 is based on Moderatus' apparent distinction between the indeterminate ποσότης deprived of the Unitary Logos' λόγοι and εἴδη (but nevertheless receptive of Form, *In Phys.* 231.7-15) and the disorganized but determinate ποσόν of corporeal matter upon which the Unitary Logos forcefully imposes geometrical and arithmetic organization (*In Phys.* 231.15-24; cf. Plotinus, *Ennead* VI.6.3!), which Tarrant distinguishes in turn from the apparently absolutely unparticipable "shadow" matter of sensibles in *In Phys.* 231.2-5. Tarrant justifies this scheme on the basis of its apparent resemblance to what seems to be Amelius'—whom Porphyry (*Vita Plot.* 20.68-80) says was influenced by Moderatus' and Numenius' interpretation of the first principles of Pythagoras and Plato—eight-level interpretation of the Parmenidean hypotheses sketched in Proclus, *In Parm.* 1052.31-1053.9. In contrast to Tarrant, Saffrey and Westerink (*Proclus: Théologie Platonicienne*, II.lviii-lix) argue that Moderatus' teaching derives not from an interpretation of the *Parmenides* but from a creative exegesis of the *Second Letter* (312E) in connection with readings from the *Republic* (VI 509B), *Philebus* (15A), and *Timaeus* (27C; 52D). In their view (following Zeller; cf., similarly, Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* I.166 and n. 1), the "three Ones" of Simplicius' report have been glossed by Porphyry (or by Simplicius, e.g., "the second One, which is truly being and intelligible"; "the third, which relates to Soul") and, consequently, follow the division of hypotheses attributed to Porphyry in Proclus' *In Parm.*, 1053,38-1054,37. The innovator was really Plotinus, who first linked the "three kings" of the *Second Letter* with the "three Ones" of the *Parmenides* in *Ennead* V 1.8. Against this, J. Whittaker (op. cit. infra, n. 64) argues that the Middle Platonic negative theologies of Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 5.12.81.5-82.1)

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Sethians' supreme Father-Mother-Child trinity was probably inspired by Plato's triad of principles in *Timaeus* 50C-D (cited above, p. 5).

But with the turn to the third century, the Platonizing Sethian treatises abandon all interest in the Genesis protology in favor of a theology of transcendental ascent. At times the *Timaeus*' influence shows itself, as in *Zostrianos*' brief treatment of the world creator Archon's demiurgical act of creation or in *Marsanes*' speculations on the configurations of the soul. But in these treatises the principal dialogues of reference have become the *Symposium* as a model for the technique of ascent, and, for their metaphysical theology the *Parmenides*, whose influence is so visible in the negative theologies of the supreme unknowable One beyond being that gives rise to the Barbelo Aeon as the realm of determinate being. By contrast, most other Sethian and most Valentinian sources seem to make little use of the *Parmenides* in their theological characterization of the highest realities, preferring instead to trade in the earlier Middle Platonic metaphysical model, where the dialogue of reference continues to be the *Timaeus*.[40]

2. *The Metaphysics of the Platonizing Sethian Treatises*[41]

The metaphysical hierarchy of the Platonizing Sethian treatises is headed by a supreme and pre-existent Unknowable One who, as in Plotinus, is clearly beyond being. It can be described only in negative terms that appear

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and Alcinous (*Didaskalikos* X, 165.5-17 Whittaker-Louis) "provide incontestable proof of a pre-Plotinian theological interpretation of the First Hypothesis of the *Parmenides* and must be taken seriously into account when one weighs the value of Simplicius' report (drawn from Porphyry) of a metaphysical interpretation on Neoplatonic lines of the first three Hypostases by the Platonist Moderatus in the first century after Christ." I substantially agree, although, following E. R. Dodds (op. cit. infra, n. 62), I think it safer to see in Moderatus evidence of the interpretation of perhaps only the first five of the hypotheses, more like the scheme Proclus attributes to certain "ancients" (the One transcending being, the One-Being/intelligibles, being with "essential oneness," [the others] participating the One, and [others] deprived of all attributes; cf. *In Parm.* 638-40) and to the anonymous "philosopher from Rhodes" (also influenced by *Republic* VI 509-511: the One transcending being, the intelligibles, the διανοητά, embodied forms of physical objects, and the receptacle of bodies; cf. *In Parm.* 1057-58).

[40] The *Apocryphon of John* is influenced by both. There may be remote influence from the *Parmenides* (and *Republic* 509b) in the Neopythagorean-influenced negative theologies of Basilides (ὁ οὐκ ὢν θεός in Hippolytus, *Ref.* VII.20.2-21.6), *Eugnostos the Blessed* (*NHC* III 71,13-72,6), the Valentinian *Tripartite Tractate* (*NHC* I 51,28-55,14) and Hippolytus' "monistic" Valentinian myth (*Ref.* VI.29.2-5).

[41] See Appendix IV, p. 55 for a graphic portrayal of the metaphysical structure here described.

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to be derived from the second half of Plato's *Parmenides*, especially its first hypothesis (137c-142a). This One is usually identified with—but sometimes distinguished from—the Invisible Spirit, the supreme principle in many Sethian treatises.[42] The ambivalence in the name for the supreme principle—Unknowable One versus Invisible Spirit—probably results from the melding of two somewhat incompatible traditional designations for the supreme deity, who for Sethianism is the Invisible Spirit and for Platonism is the One. From a traditional Sethian point of view the two terms are interchangeable, while for Platonists, the materialistic associations of the term "Spirit" in Stoic philosophy might discourage its use as a simple equivalent to the supreme One beyond all being and corporeality.

Below the supreme One, at the level of determinate being, is the Barbelo Aeon, a Middle Platonic tri-level divine Intellect.[43] As in Numenius, Amelius, and the early Plotinus, it is modeled on a reading of the *Timaeus*' (39e)

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[42] From certain earlier Sethian treatises (*Apocryphon of John*, the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, and the *Gospel of the Egyptians*), the Platonizing treatises have inherited a tendency to identify the supreme deity as "the Invisible Spirit." While the *Three Steles of Seth* (VII 125,23-25) calls this supreme pre-existent One a "single living Spirit," *Zostrianos* identifies this One as "the Triple Powered Invisible Spirit." On the other hand, *Allogenes* tends to distinguish this One from both the Invisible Spirit and the Triple Powered One, while *Marsanes* supplements them all with a supreme "unknown silent One."

[43] Cf. G. Bechtle, "A Problem Concerning the Question of Being in 2./3. Century Platonism" (*Ancient Philosophy* 20 (2000), 393-414), n. 74: "Barbelo really is equivalent to mind. It is the first thought of the Invisible Spirit and it has, principally speaking, three levels: Kalyptos, the hidden One, Protophanes, the first appearing One, Autogenes, the self-begotten One. At first this triad is an emanative triad: it represents the stages of the unfolding and proceeding of the aeon of Barbelo from its source in the Invisible Spirit. In the beginning Barbelo is hidden as purely potential intellect in the Invisible Spirit. Once Barbelo is constituted, Kalyptos will represent the realm of that which truly exists, i.e. the ideas. Next, Barbelo first appears as the male intelligence which is then conceived of as those which exist together, those which are unified (perhaps mind and ideas which are unified through intellection), represented by Protophanes who thinks the ideas of Kalyptos, on the one hand, and acts on the individuals, on the other hand. Finally, Barbelo becomes the self-begotten demiurgical mind which can be identified with the rational part of the world soul. As an established ontological level it is the individuals represented by Autogenes who has the demiurgic role of a world soul. Thus Barbelo corresponds to Numenius' second mind. Insofar as the second mind is participated in and used by the first, i.e. insofar as the second mind is prefigured in the first and thus is the first in a certain way, we have Kalyptos. Insofar as the Numenian second mind is identical with the third and acts through the third it can be compared to Autogenes. *Stricto sensu* the second mind as second mind is comparable to the Protophanes level of the Sethians."

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doctrine of a transcendent model contemplated by a demiurge who then orders the universe.[44] It contains three ontological levels, conceived as sub-intellects or aeons: one that is contemplated (νοῦς νοητός), called Kalyptos or "hidden"; one that contemplates (νοῦς νοερός or θεωρητικός), called Protophanes or "first manifesting"; and one that is discursive and demiurgic (νοῦς διανοούμενος), called Autogenes or "self-generated."[45] At the highest level, Kalyptos contains the paradigmatic ideas or authentic existents, each of which is a unique, uncombinable paradigmatic form.[46] At the median level, Protophanes contains "those who are unified," i.e., the contemplated ideas that are "all together"[47] with the minds that contemplate them, apparently to be distinguished both from ideas of particular

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[44] Numenius (Frgs. 11, 13, 15, 16 des Places), Amelius (Proclus, *In Tim.* I.306,1-14; I.309,14-20; I.431,26-28), and the early Plotinus (*Ennead* III, 9 [13].1, but rejected in *Ennead* II, 9 [33].1).

[45] Originally, these names seem to have referred, not to the ontological levels of the Barbelo Aeon, but rather to the process by which the Barbelo Aeon gradually unfolds from its source in the Invisible Spirit: at first "hidden" (καλυπτός) or latent in the Spirit as its prefigurative intellect, then "first appearing" (πρωτοφανής, cf. Phanes, *Orphicorum Hymni* 52.5-6; *Papyri Magicae* IV.943-4) as the Spirit's separately-existing intelligence, and finally "self-generated" (αὐτογενής) as a demiurgical mind, perhaps equivalent to the rational part of the cosmic soul that operates on the physical world below in accordance with its vision of the archetypal ideas contained in the divine intellect, Protophanes. In *Ad Candidum* 14.11-14, Victorinus hints at a similar progression: "For what is above ὄν is hidden (cf. Kalyptos) ὄν; indeed the manifestation (cf. Protophanes) of the hidden is generation (cf. Autogenes), since ὄν in potentiality generates ὄν in act."

[46] See *Allogenes* XI46,6-35. In *Zostrianos* VIII82,8-13 Kalyptos emerges as the second knowledge of the Invisible Spirit (the first being Barbelo), "the knowledge of his knowledge;" in 119,12-13 Kalyptos is associated with "his ἰδέα."

[47] Coptic ϩⲓⲟⲩⲙⲁ. Cf. *Ennead* IV,1 [42] 1,5-6: "There the whole of Intellect is all together and not separated or divided, and all souls are together" (ἐκεῖ δὲ (i.e., ἐν τῷ νῷ) ὁμοῦ μὲν νοῦς πᾶς καὶ οὐ διακεκριμένον οὐδὲ μεμερισμένον, ὁμοῦ δὲ πάσαι ψυχαί); V, 8 [31] 10,16-22: "And that (beauty) above everything that courses round about its (the intelligible world) entire magnitude is finally seen by those who have already seen many clear visions, the gods individually and together (οἱ θεοὶ καθ' ἕνα καὶ πᾶς ὁμοῦ), and the souls who see everything there and originate from everything, so as to contain everything themselves from beginning to end; and they are present there (in the intelligible realm) so long as they are naturally able, but oftentimes—when they are undivided—even the whole of them is present." Cf. *Corpus Hermeticum* (frg. 21 Nock-Festugière): "The preexistent one is thus above those that exist and those that truly exist, for there is a preexistent one through which the so-called universal essentiality of those that truly exist is intelligized together, while those that exist are intelligized individually. Their opposite, on the other hand, again existing individually, is

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things (in Autogenes) and from the uncombinable authentic existents in Kalyptos.[48] At the lowest level, Autogenes would be a demiurgic mind (νοῦς πρακτικός) who shapes the individuated realm of Nature below him according to the forms in Kalyptos that are contemplated and made available to him by Protophanes (the νοῦς θεωρητικός). As the equivalent of the Plotinian Soul, Autogenes analyzes these in a discursive fashion (as a νοῦς διανοούμενος), and thus comes to contain the "perfect individuals," the ideas of particular, individual things, as well as individual souls.[49] While these three define the *ontological* levels of the Barbelo Aeon, it also contains a fourth entity, the Triple Male Child, a kind of transitional or transformational figure who mediates the mutual transfer between "the all-perfect ones who exist together" in Protophanes and the "perfect individuals" in Autogenes; as such, he is apparently called "Savior."[50]

Mediating between the Unknowable One and the threefold Aeon of Barbelo is the Triple Powered One, an intermediary agent endowed with the three powers of Existence, Vitality, and Mentality (or Blessedness).[51]

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nature, a sensible substance that contains all sensibles" (Ἔστι τοίνυν τὸ προὸν ἐπὶ πάντων τῶν ὄντων καὶ τῶν ὄντως ὄντων· προὸν [ὂν] γάρ ἐστι, δι' οὗ ἡ οὐσιότης ἡ καθόλου λεγομένη κοινὴ νοεῖται τῶν ὄντως ὄντων καὶ τῶν ὄντων τῶν καθ' ἑαυτὰ νοουμένων. τὰ δὲ ἐναντία τούτοις κατὰ τὸ ἕτερον πάλιν αὐτὰ καθ' ἑαυτά ἐστι φύσις, οὐσία αἰσθητή, ἔχουσα ἐν ἑαυτῇ αἰσθητὰ πάντα).

[48] Cf. the status of Plato's "mathematicals" *apud* Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I987b14-18; XIII1080a11-b14.

[49] Coptic ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲟⲩⲁ. Originally Aristotle's distinction (cf. Psellus, [*De anima et mente*] 68,21-22 O'Meara: ἔτι ὁ νοῦς ὁ πρακτικὸς περὶ τὰ μερικά, ὁ θεωρητικὸς περὶ τὰ καθόλου); in *Ennead* III, 9 [13] 1,26-37 this third hypostasis is called Soul and the products of its discursive thought are many individual souls. For Plotinus, the equivalent of Autogenes is Soul: its highest level dwells in Intellect (the equivalent of Protophanes) and contains all souls and intellects; it is one and unbounded (i.e., having all things together, every life and soul and intellect), holding all things together (πάντα ὁμοῦ), each distinct and yet not distinct in separation (ἕκαστον διακεκριμένον καὶ αὖ οὐ διακριθὲν χωρίς, *Ennead* VI, 4 [22] 14,1-4). On individuals in Plotinus, see H. J. Blumenthal, "Did Plotinus believe in Ideas of Individuals?," *Phronesis* 11 (1966, 61-80 and "Soul, World-soul and Individual Soul in Plotinus," *Le Néoplatonisme, Colloques internationaux du CNRS à Royaumont du 9 au 13 juin 1969* (Paris: CNRS, 1971), 55-63.

[50] Rather than defining a separate ontological level in the Barbelo Aeon, the Triple Male Child, a term deriving from "triple male" as a traditional epithet of Barbelo in *Ap. John* and *Trim. Prot.*, represents the three-in-one character of Barbelo as the Invisible Spirit's First Thought or offspring who is one, yet both generates multiplicity (in particular the ontological triplicity of the Barbelo Aeon itself, cf. *Steles Seth* 120,17-121,11) and maintains its unity.

[51] A certain variability occurs in the Existence-Vitality-Mentality (or Existence-Vitality-

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The Triple Powered One is the emanative means by which the supreme One generates the Aeon of Barbelo in three phases. 1) In its initial phase as a purely infinitival Existence (ὕπαρξις or ὀντότης), it is latent within and identical with the supreme One; 2) in its emanative phase it is an indeterminate Vitality (ζωότης) that proceeds forth from One; and 3) in its final phase it is a Mentality (νοήτης) that contemplates its source in the supreme One and, thereby delimited, takes on the character of determinate being as the intellectual Aeon of Barbelo.

While these notions are more or less common to *Zostrianos* and *Marsanes* and are perhaps reflected also in the *Three Steles of Seth*, *Allogenes* seems to take an additional and innovative step by arranging the Triple Powered One's three powers into an enneadic structure, a hierarchy of three horizontal triads where, at each successively lower deployment of the triad, each term cyclically predominates and includes the other two.[52] Thus 1)

Blessedness) nomenclature for the three powers of the Triple Powered One found in the Platonizing Sethian treatises. The *Three Steles of Seth* (124,25-34; 125,28-32) consistently maintains the sequence Being-Life-Mind that became canonical among post-Iamblichan Neoplatonists. In *Allogenes* there is a brief instance of the reverse sequence of the non-canonical order (49,26-27: Vitality and Mentality and Substantiality—followed immediately by the canonical order!), but everywhere else one finds the canonical order in reverse (59,9-60,35: Blessedness-Vitality-Existence; 61,32-39: Mind-Life-Existence). In *Zostrianos* 13,27-18,4 the triad occurs in the reversed non-canonical order Vitality-Blessedness-Existence (also coordinated with the figures of Autogenes, Protophanes, and Kalyptos in the Aeon of Barbelo), but also in the canonical order Existence-Life-Blessedness in 20,16-24 and in 64,13-75,21 + 80,10-25 where *Zostrianos* draws upon the common source it shares with Marius Victorinus (*Adversus Arium* I.49,9-50,21), a source apparently deriving from some kind of epitome or commentary on the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides*. One may suggest that the order Being-Mind-Life, deriving from the influence of *Timaeus* 39e and *Sophist* 248e, is used mainly in "noological" contexts where the structure of Intellect and its relation to Soul is of uppermost concern, while the order Being-Life-Mind, is used mainly in derivational contexts where the relation of the determinate being described in Hypothesis II of the *Parmenides* to its indeterminate, unitary source described in Hypothesis I is of uppermost concern, e.g., Plotinus, *Ennead* VI, 6 (34) 8.17-22: "First, then, we take Being as first in order; then Mind, then that which has Life, for this appears already to 'contain all things' (*Timaeus* 31a4; cf. *Parmenides* 145c), while Mind, as the act of Being, is second. Thus it is clear that numbers cannot depend upon that which has Life, since unity and duality existed before that, nor would it depend on mind, as before that was being, which is both one and many (*Parmenides* 145a2)"; cf. also *Ennead.* VI, 7 [38] 17.6-43, cited in Appendix VI, p. 35.

[52] See Appendix IV p. 55, passages A and B from *Allogenes*. The same notion is found in Victorinus, *Adversus Arium* IV.5,36-45: "Thus ὀντότης, that is existentiality or essentiality, or ζωότης, that is vitality, that is the primary power of universal life, that is the primary life and source of living for all things, and likewise νοότης, the force, virtue,

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at the level of the Invisible Spirit and/or Unknowable One, the Being-Life-Mind triad is present as pure infinitival activity (Existing, Living, Thinking, though dominantly Existing); 2) on the level of the Triple-Powered One, it is present as a triad of abstract qualities (Existence, Vitality, Mentality/Blessedness, though dominantly Vitality); and 3) on the level of the Barbelo Aeon, it is present as an implicit triad of substantial realities, (Being, Life, and Mind, though dominantly Mind).[53]

As the entity that mediates between the Unknowable One/Invisible Spirit and the Aeon of Barbelo, the Triple Powered One is the most distinctive metaphysical innovation of the Platonizing Sethian treatises. But there are a host of ambiguities in the ontological relationship between the Unknowable One and/or Invisible Spirit and his Triple Power. Thus the *Three Steles of Seth* tends to portray the Triple Powered One as a dynamic structure inherent in the second principle Barbelo, while *Zostrianos* tends to portray it as the Invisible Spirit's inherent three-fold power. On the other hand, *Allogenes* and *Marsanes* tend to hypostatize the Triple Powered One by identifying its median processional phase (e.g., Vitality, Life, Activity) as a quasi-hypostatic "Triple Powered One" (or Triple-Powered Invisible Spirit) interposed between the supreme Unknowable One and the Aeon of Barbelo, while in its initial and final phases it actually *is* these two.[54]

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power, or substance or nature of thought, these powers, then, must be understood as three in one, but such that one names them and defines their proper being by the aspect according to which each has a predominating property. For there is none of them that is not triple, since being is being only if it lives, that is, is in life; likewise living: there is no living that lacks knowledge of the act of living. Appearing as a mixture, in reality they are simple, but with a simplicity that is triple."

[53] *Allogenes* 61,32-39 (exists, lives, knows); 49,26-37 (substantiality, vitality, mentality); 49,14-19 + 46,32-36 + 51,8-21 (being, life, intellect; cf. *Steles Seth* VII 123,18-26 on the Barbelo Aeon: "Because of you is Life: from you comes Life. Because of you is Intellect: from you comes Intellect. You are Intellect: you are a universe of truth. You are a triple power: you are a threefold; truly, you are thrice replicated, O aeon of aeons!").

[54] The Triple Powered One is mentioned sometimes separately from the Invisible Spirit (*Zost.* VIII 15,18; 17,7; 24,9-10; 93,6-9; 124,3-4; *Allogenes* XI 45,13-30; 52,19; 52,30-33; 53,30; 61,1-22 and *Marsanes* X 4,13-19; 6,19; 8,11; 9,25; 14,22-23; 15,1-3); sometimes as identical with or in close conjunction with the Invisible Spirit (*Zost.* VIII 20,15-18; 24,12-13; 63,7-8; 74,3-16; 79,16-23; 80,11-20; 87,13-14; 97,2-3; 118,11-12; 123,19-20; 128,20-21; *Allogenes* XI 47,8-9, 51,8-9; 58,25; 66,33-34; *Steles Seth* VII 121,31-32; *Marsanes* X 7,16-17 [the "activity" of the Invisible Spirit]; 7,27-29; 8,5-7), often called "the Triple Powered Invisible Spirit" or "the invisible spiritual Triple Powered One"; and sometimes in conjunction with Barbelo (*Steles Seth* VII 120,21-22; 121,32-33; 123,18-30; *Marsanes* X 8,19-20; 9,7-20; 10,8-11). As the activity of the Invisible Spirit, the Triple Powered One is perhaps identical with all three in *Marsanes* X 7,1-9,29.

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3. *The Anonymous Parmenides Commentary and the Platonizing Sethian Treatises*

The closest contemporarily attested non-Sethian parallel to this sequence of emanative phases, Existence, Life, and Intellect, is apparently to be found in the anonymous Turin *Commentary on the Parmenides*. First published by Wilhelm Kroll in 1892, this commentary has attracted much attention in recent decades, having been subsequently re-edited by Pierre Hadot in 1968—who also named Plotinus' disciple Porphyry as its author—and more recently by Alessandro Linguiti in 1995 and by Gerald Bechtle in 1999, who located it in a pre-Plotinian Middle Platonic milieu.[55]

According to the *Commentary*, there are two "Ones," a first One whom the *Parmenides*' first hypothesis describes as altogether beyond the realm of determinate being, and a second One, the prototype of all true, determinate being, to be identified with the "One-Being" of the second *Parmenidean* hypothesis.[56] The second One—conceived as a divine Intellect—is said to originate by unfolding from the absolute infinitival existence of the supreme One in three successive phases or activities (ἐνεργείαι). First, as a pure infinitival Existence (εἶναι or ὕπαρξις), the second One is a purely potential Intellect prefigured in the absolute being of the supreme first One. In the final phase, it has become identical with the determinate or participial being (τὸ ὄν) of Intellect proper, the second hypostasis; it has now become the hypostatic exemplification of its idea, the absolute being (τὸ εἶναι) of its prefiguration in the first One. The transitional phase between the first and final phases of Intellect in effect constitutes a median phase in which Intellect proceeds forth from the first One as an indeterminate Life.[57]

Looked at from below, whether conceived as the *Commentary*'s "second One" or as the Barbelo Aeon of the Sethian treatises, or even as the

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[55] See W. Kroll, "Ein neuplatonischer Parmenides-kommentar in einem Turiner Palimpsest," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 47 (1892), 599-627; P. Hadot, "Fragments d'un commentaire de Porphyre sur le Parménide," *Revue des Études Grecques* 74 (1961), 410-438; idem, "Être, Vie, Pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin," in *Les sources de Plotin* (Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique V; Vandoeuvres-Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1960), 107-57, and idem, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (2 vols., Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1968) 2.64-113, A. Linguiti, Commentarium in Platonis « Parmenidem » in *Testi e lessico nei papiri di cultura greca e latina* (Studi e Testi per il Corpus dei Papiri Filosofici; Firenze: Olschki, 1995) 3.63-202 (text, translation, commentary), 601-612 and 649 (indices), and most recently G. Bechtle, *The Anonymous Commentary on Plato's «Parmenides»* (Berner Reihe philosophischer Studien 22; Bern: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1999).

[56] *Anon. in Parm.* XII, 16-35 (see citation A in Appendix V, p. 56).

[57] *Anon. in Parm.* XIV, 21 (see citation B in Appendix V, p. 56); similarly Plotinus, *Ennead* VI, 7 [38] 17.6-43 (see Appendix VI, p. 57).

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Plotinian Intellect, the divine Intellect is a "traveling subject" that deploys itself, or "lives forth," beginning from the transcendent "being" of the supreme One—conceived as a self-contained static activity beyond either determination or indetermination—in three phases: 1) an initial stage of indeterminate or infinitival being (εἶναι, ὕπαρξις) interior to the One, a pure act prior to but prefiguring determinate being (τὸ ὄν); 2) the going forth of "being-in-the-process-of-determination," a boundless "otherness" or trace of Life or Vitality proceeding from the One; and 3) a final stage in which this indeterminate Life becomes defined as determinate being (τὸ ὄν) by an act of contemplative reversion upon its own prefiguration still present in the supreme One.

4. *Negative Theology and the Theological Interpretation of the Parmenides*

According to the *Apocryphon of John*, *Zostrianos*, and *Allogenes*, the supreme Invisible Spirit or Unknowable One of Sethian theology, like the Plotinian One, can only be characterized negatively and as superlative to all else. These treatises each feature negative theologies that combine the two classical approaches to the knowledge of the supreme deity, known as the *via negativa* and *via eminentiae*.[58] It is clear that these negative theologies have drawn upon common sources, quite likely certain Middle Platonic epitomes of or commentaries on Plato's *Parmenides*, especially its first hypothesis, 137c-142a. One such source is shared by *Allogenes* and the *Apocryphon of John*, while another is shared by *Zostrianos* and Marius Victorinus.

In the first instance, *Allogenes* (XI, 62,28-63,25) and both the shorter and longer versions of the *Apocryphon of John* (BG 8502, 24,6-25,7 = NHC II 3,18-33) share a nearly word-for-word parallel series of such negative predications: the supreme One or Monad is immeasurable, ineffable, incomprehensible, neither limited nor unlimited, neither corporeal nor incorporeal, neither large nor small, lacks quantity or quality, is not among existent things, and experiences neither eternity nor time. Stated in positive terms, he is superior to any conceivable attribute, including superiority itself.[59]

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[58] The *via negativa* is implemented by negative predications followed by an adversative elative clause: either triple negation, "it is neither X nor Y nor Z, but it is something superior" or double, antithetical negation, "it is neither X nor non-X, but it is something superior" or just a single negation, "it is not X but it is superior to X." The "but" clause is always positive and elative, referring to "something else" above, beyond, superior to the previously negated predications. Thus negation of all alternatives on one level of thought launches the mind to upward to a new, more eminent level of insight.

[59] See the table of parallel passages in Appendix VII, pp. 57-58 and the tables in

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Similar negative theologies are found not only in Middle Platonic philosophical and patristic authors such as Alcinous, Aristides, and Clement of Alexandria,[60] but also in Gnostic sources such as of Basilides,[61] *Eugnostos the Blessed* (*NHC* III 71,13-72,6), and the Valentinian *Tripartite Tractate* (*NHC* I 51,28-55,14). As Eric Dodds showed in 1928,[62] such negative theologies are only a natural development of Plato's doctrine of the Good "beyond being in power and dignity" in *Republic* 509b and the speculations about the non-being of the One in the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides*. Hypothesis I of the *Parmenides* (137c-142a) presents an absolutely pure, unique and unqualified "One," which cannot properly be said to "be" at all. Since possession of any attribute such as "being" in a given subject entails a measure of plurality by which its unity is thereby compromised, all one can do is resort to negative predicates or deny it any predicates whatsoever.[63]

Barry-Funk-Poirier-Turner, *Zostrien* (op. cit. n. 8), 78-9, Funk-Scopello-Poirier-Turner, *L'Allogène* (op. cit. n. 8), 53-4, Funk-Poirier-Turner, *Marsanès* (op. cit. n. 8), 87-88, and my *Sethian Gnosticism* (op. cit. n. 8), 503-4.

[60] Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* X.3-4 [164,28-165,14 Whittaker-Louis]; Aristides *Apologia* I,3 [Vona] = I, 4-5 [p. 57 Alpigiano]; cf. Syriac [p. 35 Harris]; Clem. Alex. *Strom.* V.12.81.4.1-82.4.1. On such negative theologies, see H. A. Wolfson, "Negative Attributes in the Church Fathers and the Gnostic Basilides" *Harvard Theological Review* 50 (1957), 145-156, cf. also J. Whittaker, "Neopythagoreanism and Negative Theology," *Symbolae Osloenses* 44 (1960), 109-125; idem, "Neopythagoreanism and the Transcendent Absolute," *Symbolae Osloenses* 48 (1973); idem, "ΕΠΕΚΕΙΝΑ ΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΣΙΑΣ," *Vigiliae Christianae* 23 (1969), 91-104; idem, *Studies in Platonism and Patristic Thought* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984); idem, *Alcinoos. Enseignement des doctrines de Platon.* Introduction, texte établi et commenté par J. Whittaker et traduit par P. Louis (Collection des Universités de France. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1990); J. Mansfeld, "Compatible Alternatives: Middle Platonist Theology and the Xenophanes Reception," in *Knowledge of God in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. R. van den Broek *et al.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988, 92-117); M. Jufresa, "Basilides, A Path to Plotinus," *Vigiliae Christianae* 35 (1981), 1-15; R. Mortley, *From word to silence. I: The Rise and Fall of Logos; II: The Way of Negation, Christian and Greek* (Theophaneia 30-31. Bonn: Hanstein, 1986); and R. van den Broek, "Eugnostos and Aristides on the Ineffable God," *Knowledge of God in the Graeco-Roman World* (ed. R. van den Broek, T. Baarda, and J. Mansfeld; Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain 112; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988) 202-218.

[61] Ca. 125 CE, cited in Hippolytus, *Ref.* VII 20.2-21.1.

[62] E. R. Dodds, "The *Parmenides* of Plato and the Origin of the Neoplatonic One," *Classical Quarterly* 22 (1928) 129-142, esp. 132-133.

[63] The non-existence of the One follows because it is neither a whole nor made up of parts (137c-d); it has neither beginning, nor middle, nor end (137d); it is shapeless, neither round nor straight (137d-138a); it is not anywhere, neither in another nor in itself (138a-b); it is neither at rest nor in motion (138b-139b); it is neither other than nor the same as itself or another (139b-e); it is neither similar nor dissimilar to itself or

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While Plato had applied this reasoning to Parmenides' argument for the absolute unity of the universe, these Middle Platonic sources take the innovative step of applying this absolute unity to a supreme God that transcends the universe, thereby converting the *Parmenides* into a theological treatise. As John Whittaker once pointed out, these negative theologies (he discusses those of Alcinous and Clement) are mutually dependent upon a "theologically inclined Middle Platonic commentary upon," or "a Middle Platonic theologico-metaphysical adaptation of the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides*."[64] As I have here argued in the case of Moderatus and Numenius, not all Middle Platonists regarded the *Parmenides* as a mere "logical exercise book." Like these Neopythagorean Platonists, the negative theologies of Alcinous and Clement of Alexandria as well as the authors of the Sethian Gnostic treatises that likely depend Middle Platonic sources provide—in Whittaker's words—"incontestable proof of a pre-Plotinian theological interpretation of the First Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*."

IV. Zostrianos *and Victorinus: Other* Parmenides *Commentaries?*

In addition to the *Parmenides*-inspired negative theological source shared in common between the *Apocryphon of John* and *Allogenes*, Michel Tardieu and Pierre Hadot have recently drawn attention to what may be yet another instance of such a theological commentary on—or epitome of—Plato's *Parmenides* that underlies another common negative theological source, this time shared virtually word-for-word between *Zostrianos* and book I-b of Marius Victorinus' treatise *Against Arius*.[65] Here both *Zostrianos* (VIII 64,13-

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another (139e-140b); it is without measure or sameness and so is neither equal to nor larger than nor smaller than itself or another (140b-c); it is has nothing to do with time or any length of time since it is neither the same age as nor older nor younger than itself or another (140e-141d); it neither was nor will be nor is (141d-e); "Therefore the one in no sense *is*."

[64] J. Whittaker, "Philological Comments on the Neoplatonic Notion of Infinity," *The Significance of Neoplatonism* (ed. R. Baine Harris; Studies in Neoplatonism I; Norfolk, VA: International Society of Neoplatonic Studies, 1976) 155-72, esp. 156-9.

[65] M. Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation de l'Apocalypse de Zostrien et les sources de Marius Victorinus" (pp. 7-114) and P. Hadot, "Porphyre et Victorinus," Questions et hypothèses" (pp. 117-125), in *Res Orientales IX* (Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'Étude de la Civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 1996). See also my introduction and commentary to *Zostrianos* in C. Barry, W.-P. Funk, and P.-H. Poirier, and J. D. Turner, *Zostrien (NH VIII, 1)* (Bibliothque copte de Nag Hammadi, section « Textes » 24; Québec/Louvain-Paris, Presses de l'Université Laval/Éditions Éditions Peeters, 2000), esp. 77, 150, and

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66,11) and Victorinus (*Adversus Arium* I, 49,9-40) characterize the supreme deity by means of a negative (the *via negativa*) and superlative theology (the *via eminentiae*), supplemented by a long series of positive affirmations about the One's identity as a threefold Spirit (VIII 66,14-68,13; 74,17-75,21 and *Adversus Arium* I, 50,1-21).[66]

In the negative theology common to *Zostrianos* and Victorinus, the negative attributes of the Spirit—such as immeasurable, invisible, indiscernible, and partless—mostly derive from the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides* (137c-142a), while others are transferred from the *Phaedrus* or derive from the description of matter in the *Timaeus*.[67] Such attributes are not typical Neoplatonic designations of the One, but more like the sort of scholastic formulations to be found in the Middle Platonic commentaries and treatises by Severus, Cronius, Numenius, Gaius, Atticus, and Alexander read in the meetings of Plotinus' circle.[68]

1. *The Generation of a Second One?*

But—while it seems virtually certain that this common source constituted a theological interpretation of the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides*—is it also possible that this common source went on to supplement its negative and positive theological sections with an exposition of hypothesis II as a second One that was generated from the First One? Apparently Victorinus' and *Zostrianos*' nearly word-for-word citation of the common source breaks off with the phrase "being absolutely all things in a universal mode, purely

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579-608. On Victorinus' thought, see *Marius Victorinus, Traités théologiques sur la trinité: text établie par Paul Henry, introd., transl., et notes par Pierre Hadot* (Sources chrétiennes 68-69, Paris: Cerf, 1960); M. Baltes, *Marius Victorinus: Zur Philosophie in seinen theologischen Schriften* (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 174; München-Leipzig: K. G. Sauer, 2002); and L. Fladerer, "Deus aut veritas. Beobachtungen zum Warheitsbegriff in den Opera Theologica des Marius Victorinus," *Wiener Studien* 117 (2004), 173-99.

[66] See the table of parallels in Appendix VIII, pp. 59-62 and the tables in Barry-Funk-Poirier-Turner, *Zostrien* (op. cit. n. 8), 77, Funk-Poirier-Turner, *Marsanès* (op. cit. n. 8), 89-90, Funk-Scopello-Poirier-Turner, *L'Allogène* (op. cit. n. 8), 142-3, and my *Sethian Gnosticism* (op. cit. n. 8), 506-8.

[67] *Parmenides* 140c3, 140d4 (immeasurable), 136d7-138a1 (invisible), 139b-e (indiscernible), 137c4-d3 (partless; cf. *Sophist* 245a), 137d9 (shapeless); *Phaedrus* 247c6-7 (colorless and shapeless); *Timaeus* 50d7, 51a8 (formless), 50e4 (specieless); Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* X 165,10-13 Whittaker-Louis (qualityless [and of Matter, shapeless, specieless, VIII 162,36 Whittaker-Louis]).

[68] Thus Luc Brisson, "The Platonic Background in the *Apocalypse of Zostrianos*" (cited above, n. 21), 178.

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unengendered, preexisting, a unity of union which is not itself union" (*Adversus Arium* I 50,21-22),[69] after which *Zostrianos* contains no more word-for-word parallels with the extant writings of Victorinus. But if the common source was intended as a theological interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides*, as it so far seems to be, might not one expect its exposition of the first One and its powers to be followed by an exposition of the generation and nature of the second One?

Indeed, it turns out that both Victorinus and *Zostrianos* immediately move beyond their common expositions of the supreme One to expound the process by which the indeterminate pre-existence within the One-Spirit gives rise to a subsequent hypostasis: for Victorinus the Son of God (*Adversus Arium* I 50,22-51,43), and for *Zostrianos* the Aeon of Barbelo (VIII 76, top-84,21).[70] Interestingly, the second page of *Zostrianos*' (VIII 77,20-23) version of this further exposition applies the attribute of "unengenderedness" from the apparent conclusion of the common source's positive theology to the Aeon of Barbelo as the externalized "pre-potency and primal unengenderedness" succeeding the supreme One. Moreover, the concluding lines (VIII 84,15-20) of *Zostrianos*' exposition of the emergence of the Barbelo Aeon also return to the terminology ("ἁπλ[οῦ/ῶ]ς," "ἑνάς," "Unity") of the concluding lines (VIII 75,22-25) of the common source. This continuity of vocabulary may indicate *Zostrianos*' continued dependence on the common source, suggesting that it too may have gone on to speak of the generation of "all things" that pre-exist purely unengendered in the One. Similarly, the section of Victorinus (*Adversus Arium* I 50,22-51,43) that follows the common source also goes on to treat the emergence of the Son as the "second One" (i.e., *unum unum*).[71]

Although what I have here posited as a possible third section expounding the generation of the second One contains no instances of actual word-for-word agreement between Victorinus and *Zostrianos*,[72] nevertheless—

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[69] Rendered by *Zostrianos* as "And (he is) a Henad with Unity, and absolutely all things, the unengendered purity, thanks to whom they preexist, all of them together with [. . .]" (VIII 75,20-25).

[70] For a comparative table of these texts, including one from *Marsanes*, see Appendix X, pp. 62-64 and the table in my *Sethian Gnosticism* (op. cit. n. 8), 524.

[71] Key vocabulary shared by Victorinus' citation of the common source (*Adversus Arium* I 49,9-50,21) and his exposition on the generation of the second One (*Adversus Arium* I 50,22-51,43) include: *existentia, immobilis, intelligentia, motio, motus, pater, perfectus, potentia, praeexistentia, praeintelligentia*, and *spiritus*.

[72] Now in the first, negative theological section of the common source, word-for-word agreement occupies 98% of *Zostrianos*' version and 45% of Victorinus' version, while in the second, positive theological section, this word-for-word agreement occupies only 43% of *Zostrianos*' version and 30% of Victorinus' version.

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beyond their strikingly obvious common theme of the generation of a second hypostasis through the masculinization of an indeterminate feminine power—both authors share a significant amount of common concepts and vocabulary: spirit, existence, life, motion, power, potency, virginal potential, virginal maleness, eternal movement, eternal appearance, desire, striving, thinking, declination, defection, downward tendency, and perfection by reversion or contemplation.

Beyond this shared vocabulary, the common theme shared by both Victorinus' and *Zostrianos*' account of the emergence of a second hypostasis is a gender transformation from female to male. For Victorinus, the indeterminate feminine power of Life emerging from the Father is rendered as the masculine Son of God by reversion upon its potential prefigurative existence in the Father. For *Zostrianos*, the indeterminate feminine power of knowledge emerging from the Invisible Spirit is rendered as the masculine Aeon of Barbelo by a contemplative reversion upon its potential prefigurative existence in the Invisible Spirit. The main conceptual difference is that, while Victorinus conceives this indeterminate proceeding power primarily in terms of Life, vivification, and wisdom, *Zostrianos* conceives it primarily in terms of an act of knowledge and blessedness.[73]

These commonalities strongly suggest—although by no means prove—that the source common to Victorinus and *Zostrianos* included not only a negative and positive theology of the supreme First One, but may also have contained a third part that expounded the emergence of the Second One from the First. If so, the common source may have been a *Parmenides* commentary that—like the *Anonymous*—dealt with at least the first two hypotheses of Plato's *Parmenides*.[74]

2. *The Existence-Life-Intellect Triad in Victorinus,* Zostrianos, *and* Allogenes

At this point, one must raise the question whether traces of this common source can be detected in sources other than Victorinus and *Zostrianos*. A clue is offered by the fact that, at the beginning of their affirmative expositions, both authors explain the threefold character of the One as containing

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[73] See the table of parallels in Appendix X, pp. 62-64.

[74] Although there is no explicit mention of the anonymous *Parmenides Commentary* in Proclus' *Commentary on the Parmenides* (cf. J. M. Dillon, *Proclus Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987], XXIV ff.) in discussing the "logical" and "metaphysical" interpretations of the *Parmenides*, Proclus does appear to refer to Albinus on occasion and perhaps also to Origen the Platonist (Proclus, *In Parm.* 630,37-640,17, Cousin).

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the three powers of Existence, Life, and Blessedness.[75] While the material shared between Victorinus and *Zostrianos* is obvious, Victorinus' version also contains material absent from *Zostrianos*, but present in yet another Platonizing Sethian treatise, namely *Allogenes*. Thus Victorinus' (I 49,17-18) claim that the supreme One is "without existence, life, or intellect" is absent from *Zostrianos*, but present in *Allogenes* (XI 61,36-37). Again, both Victorinus and *Zostrianos* agree that the supreme Spirit contains and co-unites each of its three powers of Existence, Life/Vitality, and Blessedness/Mentality.[76] But Victorinus' (I 50,12-15) additional claim that the One's *power of Existence* also contains its powers of Life and Blessedness[77]—absent from *Zostrianos*—is present in *Allogenes* 49,26-37.[78]

These parallels between Victorinus and *Allogenes* suggest that a similar—if not the same—source may have been available also to the author of

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[75] *Adversus Arium* I, 50,11-12 = *Zostrianos* VIII 66,14-20. The primal unity prefiguratively contains its emanative products, whether intellect (as in the anonymous *Parmenides Commentary*), or power and intellect (as in the *Chaldaean Oracles*), or Existence, Life, and Blessedness (as in Victorinus and *Zostrianos*), or Substantiality, Vitality, and Mentality (as in *Allogenes*).

[76] VIII 75,6-11: "The one 7 [belonging to the Entirety] exists in Existence 8 [and he] dwells in the [Vitality] 9 of Life; and in 10 Perfection and 11 [Mentality] <and> Blessedness"; cf. *Adversus Arium* I.50,16-18: "It has its living and acting in its own nonexisting Existence" (*et vivere et age<ere>{ns} habens secundum ipsam suimet ipsius inexistentem existentiam*) and *Zostrianos* 68,4-6: "And Life 5 <is> [an] activity (ἐνέργεια) of the 6 insubstantial [Existence] (ϯϩπαρξις ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ)."

[77] *Adversus Arium* I.50,10-15: *unus qui sit, tres potentias couniens, exsistentiam omnem, vitam omnem et beatitudinem, sed ista omnia et unum et simplex unum et maxime in potentia eius quod est esse, hoc est exsistentiae, potentia vitae et beatitudinis: quo enim est et exsistit, potentia quae sit exsistentiae, hoc potentia est et vitae beatitudinis ipsa per semet ipsam et idea et* λόγος *sui ipsius*; cf. the parallel in *Zostrianos* VIII 66,14-21: "For they are [triple] powers of his [unity: complete] Existence, Life and Blessedness. In Existence he exists [as] a simple unity, his own [rational expression] and idea." A closer but very fragmentary parallel occurs later in *Zostrianos* VIII 75,7-11: "In Existence [is] Being; in [Vitality] <is> Life; and in perfection and [Mentality] is Blessedness." Cf. *Adversus Arium* IV.21,26-22,6: τριδύναμος *est deus, id est tres potentias habens, esse, vivere, intellegere, ita ut in singulis tria sint sitque ipsum unum quodlibet tria, nomen qua se praestat accipiens*, where the powers are characterized as infinitival rather than substantival.

[78] Although Victorinus' example of each power's mutual inclusion of the other two is here restricted to the inclusion of Vitality and Blessedness in Existence, Victorinus—but not necessarily the source he shares with *Zostrianos*—was certainly aware of the notion of each term's mutual inclusion of the other two in cyclic permutation, e.g., *Adversus Arium* III.4.36-38: *necessario et sunt tria at tamen unum, cum omne, quod singulum est unum, tria sunt* and III.5.31-32: *ita in singulus omnia vel unumquidque omnia vel omnia unum.*

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Allogenes. Moreover, while Victorinus' example of the mutual inclusion of these powers in one another is restricted to the inclusion of Vitality and Blessedness in Existence, the excerpt from *Allogenes*—roughly contemporary in date with *Zostrianos*—gives the full cyclic permutation of each power's mutual inclusion of the other two[79] according to Numenius' dictum, "All things are in all things, but in each thing appropriately in accord with its own essence."[80] With a slightly different nomenclature, the only other instance of the fully developed scheme of *Allogenes* occurs in Proclus' *Elements of Theology* 103.[81] But it is *Allogenes* that offers the earliest known systematic presentation of this doctrine in religio-philosophical literature.

Now the final fragment of the anonymous *Parmenides Commentary* (XIV, 15-26) clearly adumbrates the doctrine of the Existence, Life, and Intellect triad in the Platonizing Sethian treatises. But it seems to know nothing of the doctrine of the mutual inclusion of these powers within one another that we find in both Victorinus and the Sethian treatises. This raises interesting questions: Since it breaks off at this point, 1) might the *Anonymous Commentary* have originally gone on to develop this doctrine of the mutual inclusion of each of these three powers in each other? Or 2) do we have to do with yet another *Parmenides* commentary, similar to the *Anonymous*, but which fully developed this doctrine that is only adumbrated in the final fragment of the *Anonymous*? Or 3) is it possible that the author of *Allogenes* was the first to elaborate upon this doctrine by applying Numenius' principle of universal mutual inclusion to the material available to him in his source, perhaps the very one underlying Victorinus and *Zostrianos*?

3. *Multiple* Parmenides *Commentaries?*

Two things seem clear: both *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes* were circulated and read in Plotinus' Roman seminar (Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 16), and both Victorinus and *Zostrianos* reproduce portions of a pre-Plotinian common negative and positive theological source whose conceptuality strikingly resembles that of the anonymous *Parmenides* commentary. On this basis, Michel Tardieu

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[79] See *Allogenes* XI, 49,26-37 cited in Appendix IV,A, p. 56 and the precise parallel in Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 103 [Dodds] cited in Appendix IX, p. 54.

[80] Numenius *apud* Stobaeus, *Anthology* I.49.32,68-71: ἐν πᾶσιν πάντα ἀποφαίνονται, οἰκείως μέντοι κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν οὐσίαν ἐν ἑκάστοις; cf. Porphyry, *Sententiae* 10 and Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. 103 [Dodds]; Syrianus, *In Metaphysica* 82.1-2 ascribes this saying to the "Pythagoreans."

[81] See the table of parallel passages in Appendix IX, p. 62.

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argues that "the totality of *Zostrianos*—whose content we know through the Coptic version in the Nag Hammadi Codices—was already written in 263, at the time of the arrival of the Gnostics in the School of Plotinus."[82] He furthermore notes[83] that the anonymous *Parmenides Commentary* that Pierre Hadot has attributed to Porphyry contains a statement[84] that depends upon *both*

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[82] M. Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation" (op. cit. supra, n. 65), 107-114, esp. 112-113.

[83] M. Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation" (op. cit. supra, n. 65), 100-101: "Ainsi que le note Pierre Hadot (*Porphyre et Victorinus*, II, p. 91,2), la formule *simplicitate unus qui sit tres potentias couniens* [*Adversus Arium* 50,10] se retrouve textuellement dans le *Commentaire au Parménide*, qu'il attribue à Porphyre, IX 4: ἐν τῇ ἁπλότητι αὐτοῦ συνηνῶσθαι. Voici ce passage: « D'autres, bien qu'ils affirment qu'Il (le Père) s'est lui-même dérobé à toutes les choses qui sont à Lui, concèdent néanmoins que sa puissance et son intellect sont co-unifiés dans sa simplicité » (IX 1-4, trad. Hadot, p. 91). L'expression οἱ εἰπόντες désigne les *Oracles chaldaiques*, puisque la première partie de la tradition qui leur est attribuée, ἁρπάσαι ἑαυτόν est une citation de l'oracle 3,1: ὁ πατὴρ ἥρπασσεν ἑαυτόν. Dans la seconde partie de cette tradition, δύναμίν τε αὐτῷ διδόασι καὶ νοῦν ἐν τῇ ἁπλότητι συνηνῶσθαι, l'auteur présumé du *Commentaire*, autrement dit Porphyre, n'utilise plus la terminologie chaldaïque mais celle de l'exposé (*in simplicitate couniens*) pour interpréter le second vers du même oracle 3, connu par Psellos (= oracle 33 chez Pléthon, ed. Tambrun-Krasker, pp. 4, 18 et 147-150): οὐδ' ἐν ἑῇ δυνάμει νοερᾷ κλείσας ἴδιον πῦρ. Par conséquent, force est de constater que les témoignages cités disent tous les trois la même chose: 1) l'exposé commun à Marius Victorinus et au *Zostrien*, affirme d'abord que l'Esprit est *in semet ipso manens, solus in solo* (50,9) puis énonce le contraire, à savoir que l'Esprit co-unifie dans sa simplicité les trois puissances de l'existence, de la vie et de la béatitude (50,10-11); 2) selon le fr. 3 des *Oracles chaldaïques*, pareillement, le Père à la fois s'est dérobé (= reste seul) et n'enferme pas dans sa puissance le feu qui lui est propre, il ne reste donc pas seul et se déploie; 3) Porphyre, enfin, affirme, avec les *Oracles*, que l'Un se dérobe, et, avec l'exposé, que sa puissance est co-unifiée dans la simplicité. Ces trois témoignages coincident mais révèlent aussi une histoire. Dès lors, en effet, que l'auteur du *Commentaire au Parménide* réunit dans la même exégèse deux formules, l'une appartenant aux *Oracles chaldaïques*, l'autre à l'exposé, ces deux documents sont donc les sources de cet auteur, antérieures à lui et tenues par lui comme textes fondateurs. De la même façon qu'il est peu crédible qu'il y ait identité d'auteur entre 2 et 3, l'hypothèse d'une identité d'auteur entre 1 et 3 paraît, comme nous l'avons déjà vu, difficilement envisageable en raison même de la dénomination d'Esprit (Pneuma) donnée à l'Un-Père par l'exposé."

[84] *In Parm.* frg. IX 1-4: "Others, although they affirm that He has robbed himself of all that which is his, nevertheless concede that his power and intellect are co-unified in his simplicity." The commentator alludes to certain thinkers who apparently thought that the *Oracles* had located a Father-Power-Intellect triad within a supreme Father conceived as a monadic intellect who presides over "still another" subjacent triadic intellect. It appears that not only *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes*, but also these thinkers and the anonymous *Commentary* itself entertain a triadic doctrine related to that of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, although they take a critical stance towards it.

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the *Chaldaean Oracles*[85] *and* the theological source common to Victorinus[86] and *Zostrianos*,[87] to the effect that the supreme One's power and intellect are co-unified in his simplicity. This suggests that this common source predates even the anonymous *Commentary* and that we may have to do with at least two theological expositions of the *Parmenides* in pre-Plotinian times. Or it may be that there was only one commentary—the *Anonymous*—whose missing portions included this common source. But then, what would be the relation between these and the *Parmenides*-inspired negative-theological source shared by *Allogenes* and the *Apocryphon of John* (let alone other similar Middle Platonic negative theologies)?

V. *Conclusion*

Coupled with the recent arguments for a pre-Plotinian origin of the anonymous *Parmenides* commentary,[88] Michel Tardieu's observation that the anonymous *Parmenides Commentary* may depend on *both* the *Chaldaean Oracles and* the

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[85] *Chaldaean Oracles* frg. 3: "the Father snatched himself away and did not enclose his own fire in his intellectual Power" [Majercik] and 4: "For power is with him (for the commentator, the Father), but intellect is from him" [Majercik]. According to the *Commentary*, since the Father snatched himself away, he cannot be called a solitary "One"; as the first member of a triad, he is instead "co-unified" with the entire triad as a three-in-one unity. A similar notion of self-rapture, which seems to be implied in Moderatus, may possibly be reflected also in the Sethian Platonizing treatise *Marsanes* (X 9,29-10,4) when it says that the Invisible Spirit "ran up to his place," apparently causing the entire divine world to unfold and be revealed "until he reached the upper region."

[86] Esp. *Adversus Arium* I, 50,10: "Since he is one in his simplicity, containing three powers: all Existence, all Life, and Blessedness."

[87] Esp. VIII 66,14-20 "For they are [triple] powers of his [unity: complete] Existence, Life and Blessedness. In Existence he exists [as] a simple unity."

[88] See K. Corrigan, "Platonism and Gnosticism: The Anonymous Commentary on the Parmenides, Middle or Neoplatonic?," a paper delivered to the SBL Gnosticism and Later Platonism Seminar at the 1995 annual meeting of the SBL, now in *Gnosticism and Later Platonism: Themes, Figures, and Texts*, ed. J. D. Turner and R. Majercik (SBL Symposium Series 12. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 141-177: "all the apparent innovations in the *Commentary* are already to be found in Plotinus, and there is a remarkable affinity of thought between Plotinus, Amelius, and the anonymous Commentator that stems from a still earlier tradition of commentary (in *Vita Plotini* 20 Porphyry *apud* Longinus mentions Numenius, Cronius, Moderatus, and Thrasyllus) necessitated by the need for an intelligent reading of difficult passages in Plato's *Parmenides*. Moreover, the doctrine of participation apparently espoused by the Commentator (XII, 16-22; XIV 17-20; 33-35)—namely that the Second One receives determinate being by substantivizing its own vision of the 'idea' of being that it sees in the 'First One'—is

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common source presently embedded in Victorinus and *Zostrianos* makes a strong case indeed that the *Commentary* is not by Porphyry, but—perhaps together with others like it—is a product of pre-Plotinian Middle Platonic *Parmenides* interpretation. Taken together, these factors suggest 1) that theological expositions and/or lemmatic commentaries on the *Parmenides* were available in the late second or early third century, 2) that they were used by the versions of *Zostrianos* (ca. 225 CE) and *Allogenes* (ca. 240 CE) known to Plotinus and Porphyry, 3) that they were pre-Plotinian and Middle Platonic (Michel Tardieu and Luc Brisson suggest Numenian authorship, while Kevin Corrigan suggests Cronius),[89] and 4) that the anonymous Turin *Commentary* need not necessarily be ascribed to Porphyry, but may be dated earlier, before Plotinus.

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exactly the sort of participation which both Syrianus (*In Metaph.* 109, 12 ff. [Kroll]) and Proclus (*In Tim.* III 33, 31 ff. [Diehl]) specifically *deny* to Porphyry, but attribute to *earlier* Plotinian-circle thought that has its root in Middle Platonism and Neopythagoreanism (Numenius, Cronius, and Amelius)." See also G. Bechtle, "Abstracts of an Anonymous Commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*," a paper for the SBL Gnosticism and Later Platonism Seminar at the 1996 annual meeting of the SBL now published as *The Anonymous Commentary on Plato's «Parmenides»* (Berner Reihe philosophischer Studien 22; Bern: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1999); M. J. Edwards, "Porphyry and the Intelligible Triad," *Journal of Hellenistic Studies* 110 (1990) 14-25, and idem, "Being, Life and Mind: A Brief Inquiry." a paper delivered at the 1995 Oxford Patristics Conference. See also P. Hadot's arguments for Porphyrian authorship of the *Commentary* anticipated in "Être, Vie, Pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin," *Les sources de Plotin* (Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique V; Vandoeuvres-Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1960) 107-57 and articulated fully in "Fragments d'un commentaire de Porphyre sur le Parménide," "La métaphysique de Porphyre," and the first volume of *Porphyre et Victorinus*. These arguments are accepted by L. Abramowski, "Marius Victorinus, Porphyrius und die römischen Gnostiker" (*Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 74 (1983) 108-128 and by R. Majercik, "The Being-Life-Mind Triad in Gnosticism and Neoplatonism," *Classical Quarterly* 42 (1992) 475-488, who also defends Hadot's position in her unpublished response to Corrigan's 1995 paper and in "Chaldaean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis: Some Reconsiderations," *Classical Quarterly* 51 (2001), 265-296. See Hadot's most recent defense of his theory, "Porphyre et Victorinus. Questions et hypothèses," *Res Orientales IX* (Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'Étude de la Civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 1996), 117-25.

[89] M. Tardieu, "Recherches sur la formation," 112; L. Brisson, "The Platonic Background in the *Apocalypse of Zostrianos*: Numenius and *Letter II* attributed to Plato," in *The Tradition of Platonism. Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, ed. J. J. O'Cleary (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 1999), 173-188, esp. 179-182; K. Corrigan, "Platonism and Gnosticism: The Anonymous Commentary on the Parmenides, Middle or Neoplatonic?," in *Gnosticism and Later Platonism: Themes, Figures, and Texts*, ed. J. D. Turner and R. Majercik (SBL Symposium Series 12. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 156.

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Zostrianos and *Allogenes*, taken together with the closely-related *Three Steles of Seth* and *Marsanes*, clearly indicate that the metaphysical doctrine of a supreme unity-in-trinity, whose nature could only be described in largely negative terms, need not be a post-Plotinian and therefore Neoplatonic invention, but already played a role in the thought of the Sethian Gnostics and certain Neopythagorean and Middle Platonic interpreters of Plato's *Parmenides*. Since this same doctrine subsequently found its way into the anti-Arian treatises of Marius Victorinus, Willy Theiler's long-standing working hypothesis[90]—that every Neoplatonic but non-Plotinian doctrine found simultaneously in Augustine and in a late Neoplatonist must derive from Porphyry—needs a slight modification: although Porphyry may be the immediate source, he was not necessarily the originator. For it appears that the trinitarian theology of Marius Victorinus had its metaphysical basis, not exclusively in Porphyry or later Neoplatonists, but also in the pre-Plotinian Middle Platonic philosophy of the sort best preserved in the Platonizing Sethian treatises from Nag Hammadi.

University of Nebraska,
Dept. of Classic and Religious Studies
238 Andrews Hall, Lincoln,
NE 68588-0337 USA

[90] W. Theiler, *Porphyrios und Augustin* (Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft, Geistwissenschaftliche Klasse X, 1; Halle (Saale): 1933, 1-74.

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APPENDICES

I. *Moderatus' Doctrine of First Principles*

It seems that this opinion concerning Matter was held first among Greeks by the Pythagoreans, and after them by Plato, as indeed Moderatus relates. For, following the Pythagoreans, he (Moderatus—or Plato, e.g., Letter II 312e?) declares that the first One is above being and all essence, while the second One—[[i.e., the truly existent and object of intellection]]—he says is the Forms. The third—[[i.e., the psychic]]—participates in the One and the Forms, while the final nature, that of the sensibles, does not even participate in them (the Forms = second One? both the first and second Ones?), but is ordered by a reflection of them, since the Matter in sensibles is a shadow of Non-being (Dodds: relative non-being; intelligible matter; Hubler: "the nature of sensibles is ordered by reflection [ἔμφασις] as a reflection [σκίασμα] in the Matter that is in sensibles") as it (Matter) primordially exists in quantity (ποσόν; i.e., the quantitative plurality of the forms), and which is inferior in degree even to this (i.e., quantity [Brisson]? or non-being [Dodds, Westerink]?).

And in the second book of *On Matter* Porphyry, referring to Moderatus, has also written that the Unitary Logos, [[as Plato somewhere (*Timaeus* 29d7-30a6) says]], intending to produce from itself the origin of beings, by self-deprivation made room for [ms. ἐχώρησε; ἐχώριζε, "separated from itself" conj. Zeller, Festugière] Quantity (ποσότης), having deprived it (Quantity) of all its (the Logos') proportions (λόγοι) and Forms. He (Moderatus or Porphyry or Plato in e.g., *Timaeus* 48e-51b?) called this Quantity (ποσότης) shapeless, undifferentiated and formless, but receptive of shape, form, differentiation, quality etc. It is this Quantity (ποσότης), he says, to which Plato apparently applies various predicates, speaking of the "all receiver" and calling it "formless," even "invisible" and "least capable of participating in the intelligible" and "barely graspable by spurious reasoning" and everything similar to such predicates. This Quantity (ποσότης), he says, and this Form (*sic*) conceived as a privation of the Unitary Logos which contains in itself all proportions of beings, are paradigms of corporeal Matter which itself, he says, was called quantity (ποσόν) by Pythagoreans and Plato, not in the sense of quantity (ποσόν) as a Form, but in the sense of privation, loosening, extension and dispersion, and because of its deviation from that which is—which is why Matter seems to be evil, as it flees from the good. And (this Matter) is caught by it (the Unitary Logos) and not permitted to overstep its boundaries, as extension receives the (continuous)

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proportion of ideal magnitude and is bounded by it, and as dispersion is given (discrete) form by numerical distinction. [[So, according to this exposition, Matter is nothing else but a turning away of perceptible species from intelligible ones, as the former turn away from there and are borne downwards towards non-being.]] (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 230.34-231.26; [[. . .]] indicate possible interpolations either by Porphyry or Simplicius)

II. *Numenius*

The First God—since he is in himself—is simple by virtue of being entirely unified in himself; he is never divisible. As for the Second and Third God, he is one (εἷς). But when he is associated with Matter, which is dyadic, on the one hand he unifies it, but on the other he is split by it, since Matter has the character of desire and is in flux. Thus, by not attending to the Intelligible—which would be toward himself—by gazing on Matter and caring for it, he becomes careless of himself. He attaches himself to and deals with the perceptible, yet still elevates it to his own character, having yearned for Matter. (Numenius, frg. 11,11-20 des Places)

Now if the Demiurge of becoming is good, then the Demiurge of being must be the Good-in-itself, kindred with being. For the second one—being double—as Demiurge creates his own Idea as well as the cosmos, thereupon (ἔπειτα; Dodds: ἔπει ὁ α′ i.e., "since the first is") being entirely contemplative. (Numenius, frg. 16,8-12 des Places)

III. Parmenides *156e3-7 (Hypothesis III = IIa, 155e4-157b4)*

Then the one—if it is at rest and in motion—could change to each state, for only in this way can it do both. But in changing, it changes instantaneously, and when it changes, it would be in no time, and at that instant it will be neither in motion nor at rest.

IV. *The Metaphysics of the Platonizing Sethian Treatises in* Allogenes *(NHC XI)*

Invisible Spirit/Unknowable One	*Exists*	Lives	Knows
The Triple Powered One/Eternal Life	Essentiality	*Vitality*	Mentality
The Aeon of Barbelo/First Thought (Intellect)	Being	Life	*Mind*
Kalyptos *contemplated intellect* (contains True Being)			
Protophanes *contemplating intellect* (contains the "Unified")			
Autogenes *discursive intellect* (contains the "Individuals")			
Nature (sensible cosmos)			

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A. XI 49 [26] He (the Triple Powered One) is Vitality and [27] Mentality and Essentiality. [28] So then, Essentiality [29] constantly includes its [30] Vitality and Mentality, [31] and [32] Vitality includes [33] Substantiality and [34] Mentality; Mentality includes [35] Life and Essentiality. [36] And the three are one, [37] although individually they are three.

B. XI 61 [32] Now he (the Unknowable One) is [33] an entity insofar as he exists, in that he either [34] exists and will become, [35] or lives or knows, although he {lives}<acts> [36] without Mind [37] or Life or Existence [38] or Nonexistence, [39] incomprehensibly. (cf. *Adversus Arium* IV.23,18-31: God is incomprehensibly ἀνύπαρκτος, ἀνούσιος, ἄνους, ἄζων)

V. *The Turin anonymous* Parmenides Commentary

A. It has not been said that Being participates in the One, but that the One participates in Being (τὸ ὄν), not because the first was Being (τὸ ὄν), but because an otherness (ἑτερότης) from the One has turned the One towards this whole One-Being (τὸ ἓν εἶναι). For from the fact of being engendered somehow at the second level, being-One (τὸ ἓν εἶναι) is added. See then if Plato is like one who hints at a hidden doctrine: for the One, which is beyond substance and being (τὸ ὄν), is neither being nor substance nor act, but rather acts and is itself pure acting, such that it is itself (infinitival) being (εἶναι) before (determinate) being (τὸ ὄν). By participating this being (the εἶναι of the first One; cf. *Parmenides* 137c-142a), the One (scil. "who is," i.e. the second One of *Parmenides* 142b-155e) possesses another being (εἶναι) declined from it (the εἶναι of the Supreme One), which is (what is meant by) participating in determinate being (τὸ ὄν; cf. οὐσία in *Parmenides* 142b). Thus, being (εἶναι) is double: the one preexists determinate being (τὸ ὄν), while the other is derived from the One that transcends determinate being (τὸ ὄν), who is absolute being (εἶναι) and as it were the idea of determinate being (ἰδέα τοῦ ὄντος) by participation in which some other One has come to be to which is linked the being (εἶναι) carried over from it. (*In Parmenidem* XII, 16-35 Hadot 2:104)

B. Taken in itself as its own idea it—this power, or whatever term one might use to indicate its ineffability and inconceivability [i.e., the potential Intellect still identical with the One]—is one and simple. But with respect to existence (ὕπαρξις), life (ζωή) and intellection (νόησις) it is neither one nor simple. Both that which thinks and that which is thought (are) in existence (ὕπαρξις), but that which thinks—if Intellect passes from existence to

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that which thinks (νοοῦν) so as to return to the rank of an intelligible and see its (prefigurative) self—is in life. Therefore thinking is indeterminate with respect to life. And all are activities (ἐνεργείαι) such that with respect to existence, activity would be static; with respect to intelligizing, activity would be turning to itself; and with respect to life, activity would be inclining away from existence (*In Parmenidem* XIV, 15-26 Hadot 2:110-112).

1. The One	*Existence*		
(Procession τὸ εἶναι)		*Life*	
2. The One-Being (τὸ ὄν)			*Intellection*

VI. *A Comparative example from Plotinus*

Intellect therefore had life and had no need of a giver full of variety, and its life was a trace of that Good and not his life. So when its life was looking towards that it was unlimited, but after it had looked there, it was limited—though that Good has no limit. For immediately, by looking to something which is one, the life is limited by it, and has in itself limit and bound and form; and the form was in that which was shaped, but the shaper was shapeless. But the boundary is not from outside, as if it was surrounded by a largeness, but it was a bounding limit of all that life which is manifold and unbounded, as a life would be which shines out from a nature of this kind . . . and it was defined as *many* because of the multiplicity of its life, but on the other hand as *one* because of the defining limit. What then does "it was defined as one" mean? Intellect: for life defined and limited is intellect. And what "as many"? Many intellects. (*Ennead* VI, 7 [38] 17.6-43 trans. Armstrong)

VII. *Negative Theological Source Common to* Allogenes *and the* Apocryphon of John

Allogenes NHC XI, 62,28-63,25	*Ap. John* BG 8502, 24,6-25,7	*Ap. John NHC* II 3,18-33:
	24 [6] This is the Immeasurable Light, [7] pure, holy, [26] spotless, ineffable, [9] [perfect in in-]	**3** [17] [He] is [the Immeasurable Light], [18] pure, holy, [spotless]. [19] He is ineffable, [perfect in
He is neither Divinity [29] nor Blessedness [30] nor Perfection. Rather [31] it (this triad) is an unknowable entity of him, [32] not what is proper to him. Rather [33] he	corruptibility. He is neither [10] Perfection nor [11] Blessedness nor Divinity, [12]	in]corruptibility. [20] He is not in [Perfection or in] [21] Blessedness [or in] [22] Divinity,

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is something else [34] superior to the Blessedness and [35] the Divinity and [36] Perfection.		
For he is not [37] perfect, but he is another thing **63** [1] that is superior.	but rather something superior [13] to them.	[but rather he is far superior]. [23]
He is neither [2] boundless nor [3] is he bounded by [4] another. Rather he is something superior. [5]	He is neither infinite [14] nor unlimited (*sic*), [15] but rather he is something better than these.	
He is not corporeal; [6] he is not incorporeal. [7] He is not Great; [he is not] Small. [8] He is not a <quantity>; he is not a [<quality>]. [9]	For [16] he is neither corporeal [17] nor incorporeal; he is not Great, he is not [18] Small, nor is he a quantity [19] nor a <quality>.	[He is] neither corporeal [nor incorporeal], [24] he is not Great, [nor] is he Small. [There is no] [25] way to say "[What is his quantity?" or "What is his quality]?", [26]
Nor is he something [10] that exists, that [11] one can know. Rather [12] he is something else that is superior, which [13] one cannot know. [14]	For it is not possible for anyone to [20] contemplate him.	for it is not possible [for anyone to contemplate him]. [27]
He is primary revelation [15] and self-knowledge, [16] since it is he alone who knows himself. [17] Since he is not one of those things [18] that exist, but is another thing, [19] he is superior to all superlatives, [20] even in comparison to his character and [21] what is not his character.	He is not anything among [21] existing things, but rather something superior [22] to them—not 'superior' in the comparative sense, but **25** [1] in the absolute sense. [2]	He is not anything among [existing things, but rather he is] [28] far superior—not 'superior' in the comparative sense, but rather in the absolute sense. [29]
He neither participates in [22] eternity nor [23] does he participate in time. [24]	Not participating in eternity, time [3] does not exist for him.	He [participates neither] in eternity nor [30] in time.
He does not receive anything from [25] anything else.	For one who participates [4] in eternity, others [5] anticipated. [6] Time did not limit him, since he does not [7] receive from some other who limits. [8] And he has no need. There is nothing [9] at all before him	For one who [participates in eternity] [31] was previously anticipated. He [was not limited] [32] by time, [since] he [33] receives nothing, [for it would be something received] [34] on loan. For what is prior does not [lack] [35] so as to receive.

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VIII. Negative and Positive Theological Source Common to Zostrianos *and Victorinus*

A. *Negative Theology*

Zostrianos VIII 64,13-66,11	Marius Victorinus, *Adv. Arium* I, 49,9-40
VIII 64 [13] [He] was a [unity] [14] and a single One, [15] existing prior to [all those] [16] that truly exist,	**I, 49** [9] **Before all the authentic existents was the One or the Monad** or [10] One in itself, One before being was present to it. For one must call "One" [11] and conceive as One whatever has in itself no appearance of [12] otherness. It is the One alone, the simple One, the One so-called by [13] concession. It is the One before all existence, before [14] all existentiality and absolutely before all inferiors, [15] before Being, for this One is prior to Being; he is thus [16] before every entity, substance, hypostasis, and before [17] all realities with even more potency. It is the One without existence, without substance, [18] <life>, or intellect—for it is beyond all that— **immeasurable**, [19] invisible, **absolutely indiscernible by anything else, by the realities that are** [20] **in it, by those that come after it, even those that come from it**; [21] **for itself alone, it is** distinct and **defined by its own existence**, [22] not by act, of such a sort that its own constitution [23] and knowledge it has of itself is not something other than itself; absolutely **indivisible, without shape**, [24] **without quality** or lack of quality, nor qualified by absence of quality; **without** [25] **color, without species, without form**, privated of all the forms, without being the form in itself by which all things are formed.
((Cf. *Allogenes* XI 61,32-39: **XI 61** [32] *Now he is* [33] *an entity insofar as he exists, in that he either* [34] *exists and will become,* [35] *or {acts} <lives> or knows, although he {lives}<acts>* [36] *without Mind* [37] *or Life or Existence* [38] *or Non-existence,* [39] *incomprehensibly.*))	
VIII 64 [16] (cont.) [an] [17] immeasurable *Spirit*, <invisible?>, completely indiscernible [18] by anything else [19] that [exists] [20] in him and [outside] [21] him and [remains] [22] after him. It is he alone [23] who delimits himself,	
65 [1] [part]less, [2] [shape]less, [quality]less, [3]	
[color]less, [specie]less, [4] [form]less to them [all]. [5]	
[He precedes] them all: [6]	It is the **first cause of all** the existents whether they are [27] universals or particulars, [28] the **principle prior to every principle**, [29] **intelligence prior to every intelligence, the vigor of every power**, [30] **more mobile than movement itself, more stable than rest itself**—for it is rest by an inex-
[he is pre-principle of] [7] [every principle], fore[thought] [8] [of] every thought, [9] [strength] of every power. [10] [He is faster] <than> [his] [11] [motion], he is more stable <than>[12] [stability],	

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Table (*cont.*)

Zostrianos VIII 64,13-66,11	Marius Victorinus, *Adv. Arium* I, 49,9-40
he surpasses [13] [compaction] [14] [as well as] rarefaction. [And] he is more remote than [16] any unfathomable(ness), and he is [17] more [definite] than any corporeal entity, [18] he is purer than any incorporeal entity, [19] he is more penetrating than any [20] thought and any body. [21] [Being] more powerful than them all, [22] any genus or species, [23] he is their totality: **[66]** [1] [the whole of true] existence, [2] and [those who truly] exist; [3] [he is] all [these; for he is greater] [4] [than the whole, corporeal] [5] [and incorporeal alike], [6] [he is more] particular [than] [7] [all the] parts. [8] Existing by a [pure un-] [9] knowable [power, he] from whom [10] [derive] all those [11] that truly exist, [12] that derive from [13] the [truly] existent *Spirit*, [14] the sole One.	pressible [31] movement and it is a superlative [32] movement by an ineffable rest; **more condensed than every continuity, more exalted than every** [33] **distance; more definite than every body** and greater than every [34] magnitude, **purer than every incorporeal entity, more penetrating than every intelligence** [35] **and every body**; **of all realities it has the most potency**, it is the potency [36] of all potencies; more universal **than everything, every genus, every species, it is in an absolutely universal way the truly** [37] **Existent, being itself the totality of the authentic existents, greater than** [38] **every totality whether corporeal or incorporeal, more particular** [39] than every part, by a <pure> ineffable potency being <preeminently> all the authentic [40] existents.

B. *Positive Theology*

Zostrianos VIII 66,14b-68,13	*Adversus Arium* I, 50,10-16.1-9
VIII 66 [14] For they are [triple] [15] powers of his [unity]: [16] [complete] Existence, [17] Life and [18] Blessedness. In [19] Existence he exists [as] [20] a simple unity, ((cf. *Allogenes* **XI, 49** [28] *Essentiality* [29] *constantly includes its* [30] *Vitality and Mentality*, [31] *and* [32] *Vitality includes* [33] *Substantiality and* [34] *Mentality*; *Mentality includes* [35] *Life and Essentiality*.)) **66** [21] his own [rational expression] and idea. [22]	**I, 50** [10] Since it is one in its simplicity, it contains three powers: [11] **all Existence, all Life, and Blessedness; but** [12] **all these are one, even a simple one**, and it is predominantly in the power [13] of being—that is Existence—that the powers of Life [14] and Blessedness exist, for that by which it is and exists is the power [15] of Existence, and this is also the power of Life and Blessedness. It is itself [16] and by itself **the idea and rational expression** (λόγος) **of itself**.

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Zostrianos VIII 66,22-68,13	*Adversus Arium* I, 50,1-8
VIII 66 [22] Whomever he will find [23] he brings into [24] being. [And in] [25] Vitality, he is alive [and becomes]; **67** [1] [in Blessedness] [2] [he comes to] [3] [have Mentality]. [4] [And he] knows [that] all these [5] [become] uniquely him, [6] for [no] divinity [7] [is concerned with anything] except [what] [8] [is his] alone, and he [exists] [9] [alone] in himself [with] [10] [himself], the *single*, [*perfect*] [11] [*Spirit*]. For he dwells [12] [*within*] *that which is his*, which [exists] [13] [as] a idea of an idea, [14] [a] unity of the [15] [Henad. He exists *as* [*the*][16] [*Spirit*], inhabiting it [17] by intellect, and it inhabits [18] him. He is *not about to come forth* to any [19] place, because he [is] a *single* [20] *perfect, simple Spirit.*	**I, 50** [1] This (One) is God, this is the Father, preintelligence preexisting [2] and preexistence preserving itself in its own **Blessedness** and a motionless [3] motion and, because of this, [4] **having no need of other beings**; perfect beyond perfect things, a Spirit triple powered in [5] its **unity, perfect Spirit** and Spirit beyond spirit; for he does not [6] breathe, but rather it is the **Spirit in that which is his being**, Spirit [7] breathing toward itself so that it is Spirit, since the Spirit [8] is **not separate** from itself.
[21] He is his own place and [22] he is its inhabitant. [23] Indeed <he is> everything. And [24] on the other hand, [there] is the one who [**68**] [1] [exists in] [2] [Mentality] and [Life], [3] even [its] inhabitant. [4] And the Life [5] is [an] activity of the [6] insubstantial [Existence]. [7] That which exists in [them] [8] [exists] in him; [9] because of [him they exist as] [10] blessed[ness] and [11] perfect[ion]. And [it is the power] [12] that exists in [all those] [13] that truly exist.	He is at the same time **residence and resident**, [9] remaining in himself, alone in himself alone. (cf. **I, 50** [16] He has his **living and acting** [17] in his own **non-existent existence**;)

Zostrianos VIII 74,17-75,21	*Adversus Arium* I, 50,9-10.16-21
VIII 74 [17] It is everywhere and [18] nowhere that he [empowers] [19] and activates them all. [20] [[The ineffable, [21] unnamable one—it is [22] from himself that he [truly] exists, [23] resting himself [in] [24] in his perfection— [25] has [not] shared in [any] form, [**75**] [1] therefore [he is invisible to] [2] them [all. He has taken] [3] [no pattern for himself, nor] [4] [is he anything at all of] those [that] [5] [exist among the perfect ones] and [those] [6] [that are unified. He alone is] the one [7] belonging to the Entirety.]]	**I, 50** [9] existing at the same time **everywhere and** [10] **nowhere**. [[Being one in his simplicity, he nevertheless interiorly unites in himself these three powers: [11] universal existence, universal life, and beatitude. [[But [12] all these realities are One, even the simple One.]] And it is predominantly

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Zostrianos VIII 74,17-75,21	*Adversus Arium* I, 50,9-10.16-21
In Existence [8] [is] Being; in [Vitality] [9] <is> Life; and in [10] perfection and [11] [Mentality] is Blessedness. [12]	**in** the power [13] of being—that is of **Existence**—that the powers of **Life** [14] and **Beatitude** are contained; [[for that by which it is and exists is the power of existence, [15] and likewise with life and beatitude.]] [16] **He has his living and acting** [17] **in his own non-existent Existence**; [18] union **without distinction of the Spirit** with itself, **divinity**, [19] **substantiality, blessedness, mentality, vitality, goodness**, [20] being **absolutely all things** in a universal mode, **purely unengendered, preexisting**, [21] **unity of union** which is not itself union.
All [these] were existing [13] [in the] *indivisibility of* [14] [*the*] *Spirit*. And it is Mentality [15] on account of [which] is [16] [Divinity] and [17] and Blessedness [18] and Life and [19] Mentality and Goodness. [20] And (he is) a Henad [21] with Unity, and [22] absolutely all things, the [23] unengendered purity, [24] thanks to whom [25] they preexist, all of them together with [. . .].	

IX. *The Cyclic Mutual Inclusion of Each Power in the Other Two in* Allogenes *and Proclus'* Elements of Theology

Allogenes XI 49,26-37	Proclus, *Elem. theol.* 103:
XI 49 [26] He is Vitality and [27] Mentality and Essentiality.[28] So then: Essentiality [29] constantly includes its [30] Vitality and Mentality, [31] and {Life has} [32] Vitality includes [33] {non-} Substantiality and [34] Mentality; Mentality includes [35] Life and Essentiality. [36] And the three are one, [37] although individually they are three.	All things are in all things, but in each thing in an appropriate manner. For in Being (τὸ ὄν) there is Life and Intellect, and in Life there is Being (εἶναι) and Intellection (νοεῖν), and in Intellect there is Being (εἶναι) and Living (ζῆν).

X. *The Second Hypostasis as the Masculinization of the Spirit's Power*

Adversus Arium I 50,22-51,38	*Zostrianos* VIII 76,20-84,3 (excerpts)	*Marsanes* X 9,1-20
I 50 [22] Therefore with this One existing, the (second) One leaped forth, the One who is One. . . . **51** [1] But this One, which we say to be a One-One, is a [2] Life that is in infinite motion, creator of all other existents, whether of	**VIII 76** [20] And [21] his knowledge dwells [22] outside of him with [23] that which contemplates him [24] inwardly. . . . **77** [12] She became distinct [13] because she is [an] all-perfect instance [14] [of] perfection [15] existing as contemplation.[16]	

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Table (*cont.*)

Adversus Arium I 50,22-51,38	*Zostrianos* VIII 76,20-84,3 (excerpts)	*Marsanes* X 9,1-20
[3] the authentic existents or the existents, being the Logos of the "to be" of [4] all existents, moving itself by itself in an eternal [5] movement, having its movement in itself, or rather being itself [6] movement . . . [10] For proceeding [11] as a potency out of a state of immobile pre-existence—unmoved [12] so long as it was in potency—this never-resting motion [13] arising out of itself and hastening to engender all sorts of movement [14] since it was infinite life—this motion as it were appeared outside in vivifying [15] activity. It necessarily follows that life has been engendered . . . [19] Life is thus this [20] Existence of all existents, and insofar as life is [21] movement, it has received a sort of feminine power, since it [22] desired to vivify. But since, as was to be shown, this movement, [23] being one, is both Life and Wisdom, Life is converted [24] to Wisdom, or rather to the paternal existence, [25] or better yet, [26] by a retrograde movement to the paternal power. Thus fortified, Life, hastening back to the Father, has been made male. [27] For Life is descent and Wisdom is ascent. It is also Spirit; [28] the two are thus Spirit, two in one. And likewise Life: at first nothing other than [29] primal Existence, it was necessarily first invested with a virginal [30] potential to	With respect to that one, [17] [she] is an offspring that supplements [18] him, even that which derives from [19] his ineffable power. [20] She has [21] a pre-potency, even [22] the primal unengenderedness [23] succeeding that one, [24] because with respect to all the [25] rest [she is] a first aeon. **78** [6] It is she who knows] [7] and [who foreknows] [8] herself, [truly existing] [9] as a [single] aeon [10] in act [and] [11] potency and [Existence]. [12] It is not [in] [13] time that she originated, but [she] [14] [appeared] eternally, [15] having eternally stood [16] in his presence . . . **79** [5] [And she is an insubstantial Existence] [6] [and a power] that [truly exists]. [7] [She is the] first [insubstantial] [8] Existence [after] [9] that one. [10] [And from] the undivided one toward [11] existence in act [12] move the [intellectual] perfection [13] and intellectual life [14] that were [15] blessedness and [16] divinity. The [entire] Spirit, [17] perfect, simple [18] and invisible, [19] [has] become a unity [20] in existence and [21] act, even a [22] simple Triple [Powered] One, [23] an Invisible Spirit, an [24] image of the one that [25] truly exists . . . **81**[6] She [was] existing [individually] [7] [as cause] of [the declination]. [8] Lest she come forth anymore [9] or get further away [10] from perfection, she [11] knew herself and him, [12] and she stood	**X 9** [1] For this reason the [2] Virgin became male (as νοῦς, i.e., the Aeon of Barbelo), [3] because she had separated from the male (i.e., the Invisible Spirit). The [4] Knowledge stood outside of him, [5] as if belonging to him. [6] And she who exists is she who sought. [7] She is situated just as [8] the Triple Powered One is situated. [9] She withdrew [10] from [these] two [powers] (the first two powers of the Triple Powered One), [11] since she exists [outside of] [12] the Great One (i.e., the Invisible Spirit), [seeing what] [13] is above [her, the Perfect One (i.e., the Triple Powered One)] [14] who is silent, [who has] [15] this [commandment] [16] to be silent. His knowledge [17] and his hypostasis [18] and his activity [19] are those things that the power (i.e. Barbelo) [20] of the Triple Powered One expressed.

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Table (*cont.*)

Adversus Arium I 50,22-51,38	*Zostrianos* VIII 76,20-84,3 (excerpts)	*Marsanes* X 9,1-20
be subsequently engendered as the male [31] Son of God by masculine birth from the Virgin—since in the first motion, when it first [32] appears, Life initially was—as if it defected from the Father's power and by its innate [33] desire to vivify while it was still interior— [34] externalized by its own movement. When it again [35] reverted upon itself, it returned to its paternal [36] existence and became male. Completed by its all-powerful [37] vigor, life has become perfect Spirit by [38] reversion toward the higher, i.e., toward the interior away from its downward tendency.	at rest [13] and spread forth [14] on his [behalf]—, [15] since she derived[16] [from] what truly exists [17] {... [18] ... } in common with all [19] things—to know herself [20] and the one that pre-exists.... **83** [8] She was called [9] Barbelo by virtue of [10] thought, the [11] perfect virginal male of three[12] kinds. And it is her own knowledge [13] through which she originated [14] lest [15] [she be drawn] down and[16] come forth further [17] by the things that exist [18] in her and that follow[19] her.... **84** [10] She stood at rest [as the] [11] first one of that [which] [12] truly exists. In [another way] [13] [she is] truly the Blessedness [14] of the Invisible [Spirit], [15] the knowledge of the primal [16] Existence within the [17] simplicity of the [18] Invisible Spirit— [19] 'within the Henad' resembles [20] 'within the Unity'—that which [21] is pure and form[less].	

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